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SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 26

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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

So much for the holiday spirit

Coast Mountain bans a driver from carrying on his 16-year tradition of dressing as Santa behind the wheel PAGE 3

Lessons from Mandela

Free the Children co-founder Craig Kielburger tells Metro how the global icon helped shape the youth movement PAGE 12

CANADA POST'S HOME-POST IS HISTORY

DOOR-TO-DOOR DELIVERY BEING REPLACED WITH COMMUNITY MAILBOXES IN URBAN AREAS PAGE 22

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Vancouver Coun. Tim Stevenson plans to travel to the Sochi Olympics in February 2014 to try to convince the International Olympic Committee to do more to protect LGBTQ rights. KATE WEBB/METRO

Gay councillor to advocate for rights in Sochi

Russia. Tim Stevenson wants a Pride House for the LGBTQ community in every Olympic city

Vancouver is sending openly gay city councillor Tim Stevenson on a mission to the Sochi Olympics in February to try to convince the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to enshrine gay rights in its charter and guarantee safe spaces for LGBTQ athletes.

Stevenson, who was the deputy mayor during the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, said the new Russian law banning "gay propaganda" under punishment of fines and imprisonment inspired council's unanimous de-facto decision, which will be formalized Monday.

"This isn't about trying to raise international incidents," he said on Wednesday.

"I want to go to be sure that we speak to the IOC and get them to understand how important it is to include sexual orientation in the charter, and how important it is to have a safe house at every Olympics from here on in so that we don't have again a situation like we do in Sochi now."

Vancouver was the first city ever to host a Pride House, a special resource centre and safe space for LGBTQ Olympic and Paralympic athletes, coaches, spectators and other visitors.

While London continued the tradition in 2012 and there are already plans in the works for one in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, Russia turned down the LGBTQ community's requests for a Pride House in Sochi.

"What we're aiming for is to convince the IOC that hereafter in every Olympic city there be a Pride House," Stevenson said. "In other words, that when you bid to have the Olympics you must include a Pride House as well."

Stevenson admitted he is apprehensive about his one-week trip, which will begin just a few days before the Games begin and, if all goes according to plan, end a few days after.

Foreigners who break the law can be punished with a fine equivalent to $160 or a 15-day jail sentence, followed by deportation.

He will be accompanied by Olympic Pride House co-founder Dean Nelson and former VANOC spokesperson Maureen Douglas. Given the high costs of flights and hotels in Sochi, their trip is expected to cost $100,000, which they are raising through private donations.

KATE WEBB/METRO

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A community shuttle dressed as a reindeer. TRANSLINK

RCMP sergeant

Conditional discharge for officer who stole sweatshirt

A B.C. provincial court judge has handed a former RCMP sergeant a conditional discharge after he tearfully admitted to stealing a $70 sweatshirt. Derek Brassington, who was once a lead officer for the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team, wept as he pleaded guilty to theft and then apologized in court on Wednesday. When he took the clothing from a Burnaby, B.C., store, he said he'd been suspended from the force for another matter and he told the court his marriage has fallen apart and that he has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

No more Santa suits for bus driver

Don we not our gay apparel. Coast Mountain's new uniform policy prohibits costumes

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Santa suits are a no no no for Coast Mountain bus drivers.

A bus driver who dressed as Santa during the holiday season for 16 years is no longer allowed to don his red suit because it violates the company's year-old uniform policy.

Coast Mountain originally gave driver Kirk Rockwell permission to wear the suit again this year, but reneged it because "he might not be identifiable as the transit operator," Local 111 union president Nathan Woods said.

The company also reasoned that garland the driver placed around the fare box obstructed operations, Woods said.

Rockwell is "pretty upset" about Coast Mountain's decision to stop him from making his East Vancouver 27 and 28 bus routes a little more festive.

"He appreciates the time of year and the smiles he draws from the passengers and the other operators," Woods said. "Especially in times with all the service cuts, the smiles he generates are welcome."

When the union asked the company to reconsider, it said he could wear a Santa hat or a Christmas tie.

"They do have a uniform policy, we understand that, but it's not like every driver wants to dress up to be Santa," Woods said.

There were no passenger complaints about the Santa suit, but Coast Mountain spokesman Derek Zabel said it is important for operators to be identifiable to the public for professionalism and personal safety reasons.

The company gets many requests from operators to wear clothing that promotes charities, so they denied the Santa suit to "make it fair across the board," Zabel said.

"Our operators are expected to be adhering to a policy," he said. "I've heard some people call us grinches and that sort of thing, but we do a lot during the festive season to celebrate the season."

Coast Mountain decorates one bus and one community shuttle like reindeer and donates thousands of toys to the Lower Mainland Christmas Bureau.

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Liquor Policy Review. Province supports sale of B.C.-made alcohol at farmers' markets

MATT KIELTYKA
matt.kieltyka@metronews.ca

Visitors to farmers' markets across the province will be able to sample and buy made-in-British Columbia wine, beer and spirits next spring, Premier Christy Clark has announced.

Clark was at West Kelowna's Volcanic Hills Estate Winery on Wednesday to roll out 12 liquor reforms the government says will help local producers thrive.

"Our liquor regulations are antiquated," said Clark. "Change is coming; citizens asked for change."

The measures announced Wednesday will also allow B.C. liquor to be sampled and sold at festivals and competitions.

It also relaxes restrictions on tasting rooms, so that winery visitors can take a glass outside for a picnic. Producers will be able to set up satellite tasting rooms off-site and even sell other producers' liquor for increased customer choice.

"I think this is a real win-win," said Jon Bell, president of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets. "This is a part of the B.C. farm experience."

Other recommendations include setting up a quality-assurance program for craft beer and artisan spirits, as well as reducing red tape for businesses trying to obtain a brewery, winery or distillery licence.

More announcements will follow as the government reviews parliamentary secretary John Yap's final Liquor Policy Review report.

B.C.-made spirits, along with B.C. wine and beer, will soon be available at farmers' markets, the premier announced Wednesday. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

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Albertans concerned with downstream impact of dam

Flooding, poisoning of fish. BC Hydro's Site C dam proposal catching environmental flack from several directions

The province of Alberta is concerned that a multibillion-dollar hydroelectric dam proposed in northeastern British Columbia could increase mercury levels in fish and escalate the risk of floods or drought along the Peace River that flows through its province.

Alberta's Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, which manages lands, forests, fish and wildlife in the province, has filed a 23-page submission setting out its concerns to the panel reviewing the massive project.

Environmental review hearings for the $7.9-billion Site C dam proposal by BC Hydro are underway in Fort St. John, B.C.

Two existing dams on the Peace River in B.C. have already significantly altered the flow of the river into the neighbouring province, the Alberta submission said, and this has both positive and negative impacts in Alberta.

"Alberta is concerned that Site C will further exacerbate the negative impacts," said the document filed Nov. 29.

The Site C dam would flood an 83-kilometre stretch of the Peace River from approximately Fort St. John to just upstream of Hudson's Hope. It would be the third dam on the river, downstream from the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams.

The two existing dams already lower the river's natural flow from May to late July, and increase flow from mid-October to mid-April. There are benefits to the flow regulation from BC Hydro, such as a reduced risk of flooding, but there are also risks, Alberta said.

Among those risks is an expected increase in methylmercury levels in fish during construction of the dam.

"Alberta acknowledges that BC Hydro expects increases in MeHg levels in fish populations downstream of the Alberta-B.C. border to be temporary and within fish consumption guidelines," the submission said.

"However, it is unclear whether Albertans are aware of this increase, the amount of the increase, and the duration of the impact."

The Alberta government requested ongoing information from BC Hydro to enable the province to inform fishermen on the Peace River of changes to methylmercury levels in fish until concentrations return to pre-construction levels.

An artist's rendering of the proposed Site C dam near Fort St. John. COURTESY BC HYDRO

Methylmercury levels in fish

"It is unclear whether Albertans are aware of this increase, the amount of the increase, and the duration of the impact." Alberta's Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

The impact of the dam on managing ice-related flooding and concern about minimum flow rates during construction were also singled out as concerns. Reduced peak flow affects the aquatic ecosystem on the Peace River, the Peace-Athabaska delta and other riparian wetlands, the document said.

Water fluctuations also cause mortality to fish and eggs by stranding, or indirectly through increased stress on fish, the report said.

There are also concerns about changes Site C will cause in water temperature downstream from the dam and reservoir, making the Peace River slower to warm in spring and slower to cool in summer.

"Such changes to water temperatures, though slight, may impact the current distribution and range of cold- and cool-water fish species within Alberta, causing potential declines in some species and increases in others," the report said. "Temperature changes may also impact the timing of ice freeze-up and break-up events."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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'Without parallel.' Forest paintings by Emily Carr to be shown at VAG

An exhibition of more than 40 forest paintings by Emily Carr will open at the Vancouver Art Gallery on Dec. 21.

The show spotlights works created by Carr in the 1930s, most of them depicting scenes within 25 kilometres of her Victoria home.

Carr's forest paintings are the most important representation of B.C.'s landscape in the first half of the 20th century, the gallery said.

"The vigour and power of these works is without parallel in Canadian art," said exhibition curator Ian Thom.

The paintings in the show are almost all drawn from the Vancouver gallery's permanent collection. The gallery is home to the most significant collection of Carr's work in the world, comprising 254 paintings, drawings and other works.

More than 40 forest paintings by Emily Carr will be exhibited at the VAG on Dec. 21. VANCOUVER ART GALLERY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Emily Carr: Deep Forest will run until March 9.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cops have message for potential gangsters: Think twice

B.C. police want gangsters to think twice about their life choices. The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit launched a two-year gang-prevention media campaign on Tuesday that it hopes will engage the entire community, from potential gangsters to their families. Even though the number of gang-related murders is lower than in recent years, police hope the EndGangLife.ca posters, like the one pictured here, will encourage people to make better choices. CONTRIBUTED

A steal, you say? Vancouver police bust clothing-theft ring

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Police have recovered $250,000 in stolen clothing from a small apartment set up like a shop, complete with customers, display racks and dressing rooms.

Labels such as North Face, Tommy Hilfiger and Mexx hung from racks and designer wallets and perfume filled kitchen cabinets in the 500-square-foot unit in the 5300 block of Victoria Drive, according to Vancouver police.

Police raided the apartment on Dec. 7 after they received a tip from the anti-fencing unit. Ten people were inside trying on clothes, some with price tags still attached, being sold at one third of the retail price.

Two women, aged 45 and 53, were arrested for possession of stolen property over $5,000. They have been released from custody pending further investigation.

Police are trying to find the lawful owners of the allegedly stolen merchandise.

B.C. to lose $17M in adult ESL funds

Federal cuts. Minister says it's unclear how services will be delivered to thousands of students

British Columbia's minister of advanced education says he'll lose about $17 million in funding when the federal government changes how it delivers English-as-a-second-language training to adults.

Amrik Virk also says the federal government hasn't yet informed B.C. on how it plans to deliver those services to thousands of students.

He says the federal government gave the province $22 million a year for ESL training under the Canada-BC Immigration Agreement, and of that money his ministry received about $17 million.

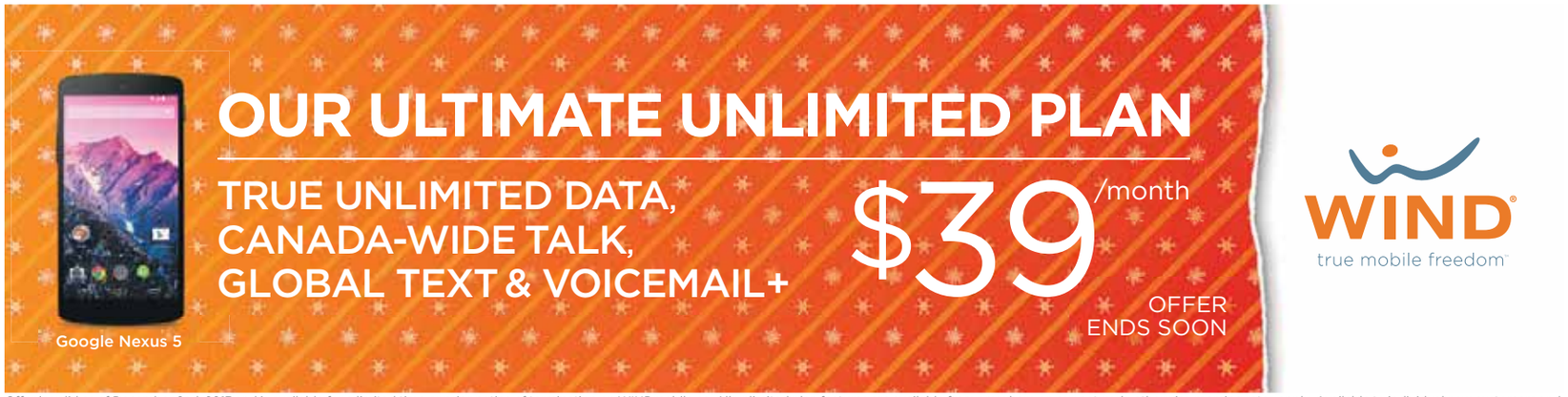
Virk says his ministry used the money to pay for ESL training in its public universities and colleges, but in April 2012 the federal government told B.C. it was going to cancel the agreement.

The provincial government then helped the institutions apply directly to the federal government for the money, but Virk says it has just learned none of the proposals were accepted.

Virk says about 9,000 students received ESL training last year, and the immigration agreement ends April 1, 2014.

"I don't want to speculate on how the federal government is going to do it, you know, which organizations, how they are going to deliver the training," says Virk.

"What we do know is that we are not going to be able to use that $17 million from the federal government to provide that training." THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Mandela memorial interpreter a fraud

U.S. President Barack Obama stands next to a fake sign-language interpreter as he makes his speech at the memorial service for Nelson Mandela at the FNB Stadium in Soweto, near Johannesburg, on Tuesday. MATT DUNHAM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Say what? Advocates for the deaf say sign-language interpreter was a faker who just waved his arms around meaninglessly

As one world leader after another took the stage in a gigantic soccer stadium to pay homage to Nelson Mandela in Soweto, South Africa, the man at arm's reach from them appeared to be interpreting for the deaf at the hours-long memorial.

The unidentified man, who stood about one metre from U.S. President Barack Obama and other leaders, "was moving his hands around but there was no meaning in what he used his hands for," Bruno Druchen, the Deaf Federation of South Africa's national director, said.

When South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa told the crowd that former South African President F.W. de Klerk was among the guests in a VIP section, the man at his side used a strange pushing motion unknown in sign language that did not identify de Klerk or say anything about his presence in the stadium, said Ingrid Parkin, principal of the St. Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg.

The closest the man's gestures at that point came to anything in sign language might possibly be the words for "running horse," "friend" or "beyond," she said, but only by someone who signs terribly. The man also used virtually no facial expressions to convey the often emotional speeches of the leader, an absolute must for sign language interpreters, Parkin said.

Collins Chabane, one of South Africa's two presidency ministers, told reporters the government is investigating "alleged incorrect use of sign language at the National Memorial Service" and did not identify the man, but added the "government will report publicly on any information it may establish."

Outraged deaf people and sign language interpreters from Canada to China have complained about the man, Parkin said. "This man himself knows he cannot sign and he had the guts to stand on an international stage and do that," Parkin said. "It's absolutely impossible that he is any kind of interpreter. Or a language person at all, because he's not even using a language there."

The allegation of the use of a bogus sign interpreter was yet another example of bad organization at the service Tuesday. Other problems included breakdowns in public transportation that hindered mourners from getting to the soccer stadium and a faulty audio system that made the remarks of world leaders inaudible for many. Police also failed to search the first wave of crowds who rushed inside the stadium after authorities opened the gates just after dawn. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Repeat offender

The man also did sign interpretation at an event last year that was attended by South African President Jacob Zuma.

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Craig Kielburger leaves condolences for Nelson Mandela in South Africa. COURTESY MICHAEL RAJZMAN

CRAIG KIELBURGER

As the world mourns Nelson Mandela, one of Canada's preeminent youth leaders, and co-founder of Free The Children, spoke with Metro Tuesday from Johannesburg after attending Mandela's memorial.

"A SENSE OF JUST PROFOUND GRATITUDE."

Let's start with your response to the massive memorial service you attended for Nelson Mandela.
The emotions that are running through me — I'd say one is gratitude for the role that he played as one of the great leaders in our world for human rights … but also, I have a sense of responsibility and I hope everyone does feel a sense of responsibility, that the world was fortunate to see someone like Mandela and now the question is, what will we do to live that legacy … I'd say it's very much a sense of just profound gratitude.

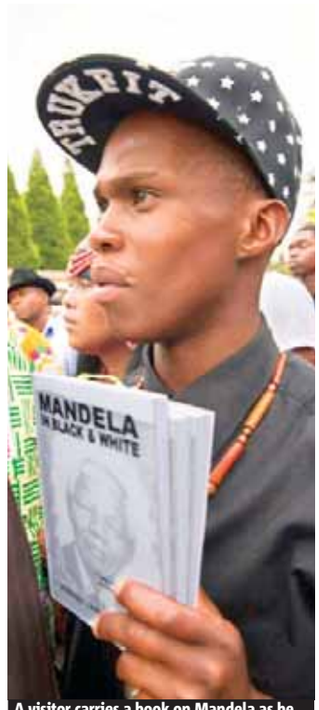
How has Nelson Mandela helped shape Free The Children?
I had the pleasure to hear him speak in various capacities … and once, very briefly meeting him, as did my brother — to ask him a question about his leadership philosophy … he reflected on how he was as a young person, a shepherd or herder, and he learned a lesson that forever stayed with him … that you always had to stand in the back to make sure your sheep, or your goats, always got to where they were supposed to go — that they didn't wander off to the side … that simple idea, the lessons that he taught — the humanity — is an amazing influence.

What was Mandela's impact on you?
Inspiring, I don't think there's any other word that one can use … inspiring in what he represented, inspiring in how he carried himself, inspiring in his words — but mostly inspiring in his dreams … That to lead, you must walk from behind and I think that speaks to the essence of who he was. A leader through-and-through, but someone who was so dedicated to making sure the most vulnerable always arrived.

How important is it that leaders are encouraging the world to model themselves after Mandela?
I hope that more world leaders would model themselves on Mandela. I think it's very easy to quote him, it's very difficult to model him … if world leaders want to honour Mandela … they can increase their foreign-aid commitments, they can promote service and volunteerism in their country, they can show that same compassion and forgiveness with some of the great intractable conflicts of our world — that would be a great way to honour Mandela.

What legacy do you think Mandela will leave behind?
I think legacy isn't something that he writes. In his time on this earth, he inspired us with his courage and his humanity and his willingness to forgive and his legacy will, ironically, be something we write … the legacy is in our hands and I think we have an opportunity that we should not waste.

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON



A visitor carries a book on Mandela as he stands with gatherers outside Mandela's house. COURTESY MICHAEL RAJZMAN

Dispatches from South Africa by Craig Kielburger

1 Arrival. With a heavy heart

On Wednesday, I walked into the courtyard of the Union Buildings in Pretoria where, in 1994, Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the first democratically elected president of South Africa. I headed up a flight of stairs and stopped. It felt as though there was pressure on my chest, heaviness in my heart. I took a deep breath. I expected to see a closed casket and hadn't prepared to see his body. People are lining up for up to seven hours to pay their respects. Of course.

2 Tribute. A sense of gratitude

I'm struck how a nation can come together for such an overwhelming tribute to Mandela, patriarch of this lush country once fractured by racism and hatred. These tributes extend beyond borders. I can't imagine another living person today, or in my lifetime, that could have such a unifying effect. Standing waist-deep in flowers left outside Mandela's house, sharing stories with his friends at a service, standing with South Africans to visit, I feel gratitude.

3 Pride. A never-dying spirit

"For the spirit of Nelson Mandela, it was the right time for him to go because he had done everything humanly possible to change this country. His was a never-dying spirit that showed us anybody can become anything." — Sammy Ntimanem, 34, in the Union Buildings in Pretoria

4 Hope. More than just a moment

"We have been friends and co-workers for eight years. We are very patriotic and support every event we can, from political, to sports, to moments like this. But this is more than just a moment. We came to the square to give tribute to the greatest man on Earth," said Esther Rubin, with Lilahloane Mokale in Nelson Mandela Square, Johannesburg. Added Mokale: "We love him so very much … What we have is because of him. I hope we can go on without him."

5 Remember. For the next generation

"I so want my daughter to remember this day. That's why I have her here. As she grows up I will keep telling her stories about apartheid and how it was before in this country." — Monica Ntimana, 29, with Grace, five months

Work continues

100

At Free the Children, we are adding our voice to the tributes to Mandela. Our organization, along with Canadian schoolchildren, is building 100 schools in Africa. Mandela once said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

PHOTOS COURTESY MICHAEL RAJZMAN

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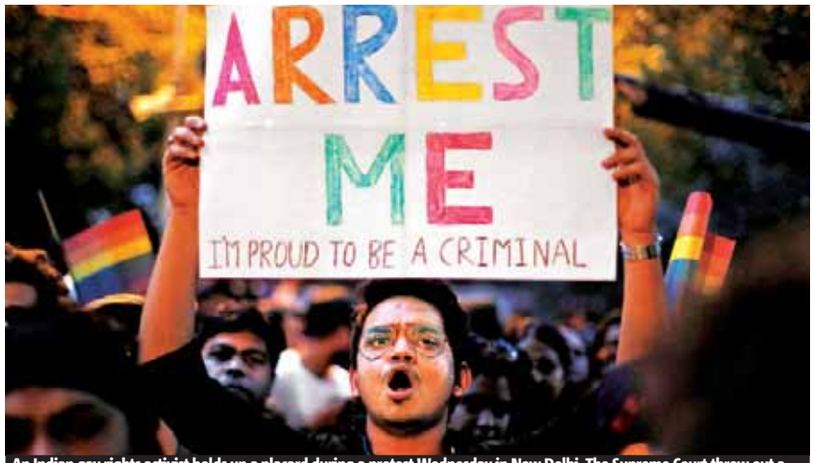

An Indian gay rights activist holds up a placard during a protest Wednesday in New Delhi. The Supreme Court threw out a 2009 High Court decision to decriminalize homosexuality, dealing a blow to gay activists who have argued for years for the chance to live openly in India's deeply conservative society. ALTAF QADRI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India's top court says being gay is criminal

1860s law. Country among 70 others that criminalize homosexual conduct, according to human rights groups

India's Supreme Court struck down a 2009 lower court decision to decriminalize homosexual conduct, dealing a blow Wednesday to gay activists who have fought for years for the chance to live openly in India's deeply conservative society.

The judges said only lawmakers and not the courts could change a colonial-era law that bans homosexual acts and makes them punishable by up to a decade in prison.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community across India reacted to the surprise decision with defiance.

After the ruling, dozens of activists outside the court began crying and hugging each other in consolation.

"This is a very sad day for us, we are back to square one in our fight for the democratic rights of the gay community," said Ashok Row Kavi of the activist group Humsafar Trust.

Lawyers and supporters of gays, lesbians and transgender people vowed to continue pressing for the removal of the law, which they say encourages discrimination, even if it is rarely invoked by prosecutors.

"We feel very let down," said lawyer Anand Grover, who had argued the case on behalf of the advocacy group NAZ Foundation. "But our fight is not over and we will continue to fight for the constitutional right."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Encourages 'discrimination'

"We cannot be forced back into the closet. We are not backing off from our fight against discrimination."

Gautam Bhan, an activist who had petitioned the court

Weather worry. Syrian refugees hit by storm in Lebanon

A Syrian refugee boy stands outside his tent as heavy snow covers the region, in a camp for Syrians who fled their country's civil war, in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, on Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A blustery storm dropped torrential rain and snow on Lebanon and Jordan on Wednesday, forcing aid agencies to scramble to distribute desperately needed winter supplies like blankets and plastic tarps to Syrian refugees who have sought safe haven in the countries.

The storm, dubbed Alexa, pushed temperatures below freezing in northern Lebanon and some areas of the Bekaa Valley, which is dotted with informal refugee settlements. The winter weather heaped another layer of misery on the already grim existence of many of the estimated 1.4 million Syrians in Lebanon who fled the civil war raging in their homeland.

Since the Syrian conflict began in March 2011, more than two million Syrians have fled the violence in their homeland to countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. Many will spend the winter in flimsy tents with often only a plastic sheet covering the ground.

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Busted. Man running 'revenge porn' website charged with extortion

A San Diego man named Kevin Christopher Bollaert, 27, was charged Tuesday by the California Department of Justice on 31 felony counts of conspiracy, identity theft and extortion.

Bollaert created the "revenge porn" website ugotposted.com a year ago, according to court documents. The site let users anonymously post more than 10,000 nude and explicit photographs of others without their permission.

Unlike other such sites, ugotposted.com required that the victim be identified by name, age and other information, leading to the identity-theft allegations.

Documents say Bollaert charged victims a fee ranging from $249.99 to $350 to remove the images, using emails sent through a second website, changemyreputation.com.

Both websites were inactive as of Tuesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

South Africa

Desmond Tutu's home robbed during trip to memorial

Retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu's home in Cape Town was robbed Tuesday — the same day the Nobel Peace Prize laureate spoke at the memorial service honouring his fellow anti-apartheid fighter Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg.

No arrests have been made so far, a police statement said. It provided no further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suspended senator denied Parliament Hill press pass

Suspended Sen. Patrick Brazeau applies for membership to the parliamentary press gallery in Ottawa earlier this month. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ottawa. Sen. Patrick Brazeau's fledgling journalism career off to shaky start

The parliamentary press gallery in Ottawa has denied suspended senator Patrick Brazeau's bid for accreditation as a freelance reporter for Halifax-based Frank Magazine.

Press gallery president and Radio-Canada reporter Daniel Thibeault said that Brazeau wasn't eligible for membership because he's still a senator.

"So we feel as an executive that it's incompatible," Thibeault said.

Can't have it all

"You can't be a senator and a member of the press gallery at the same time."

Daniel Thibeault, press gallery president

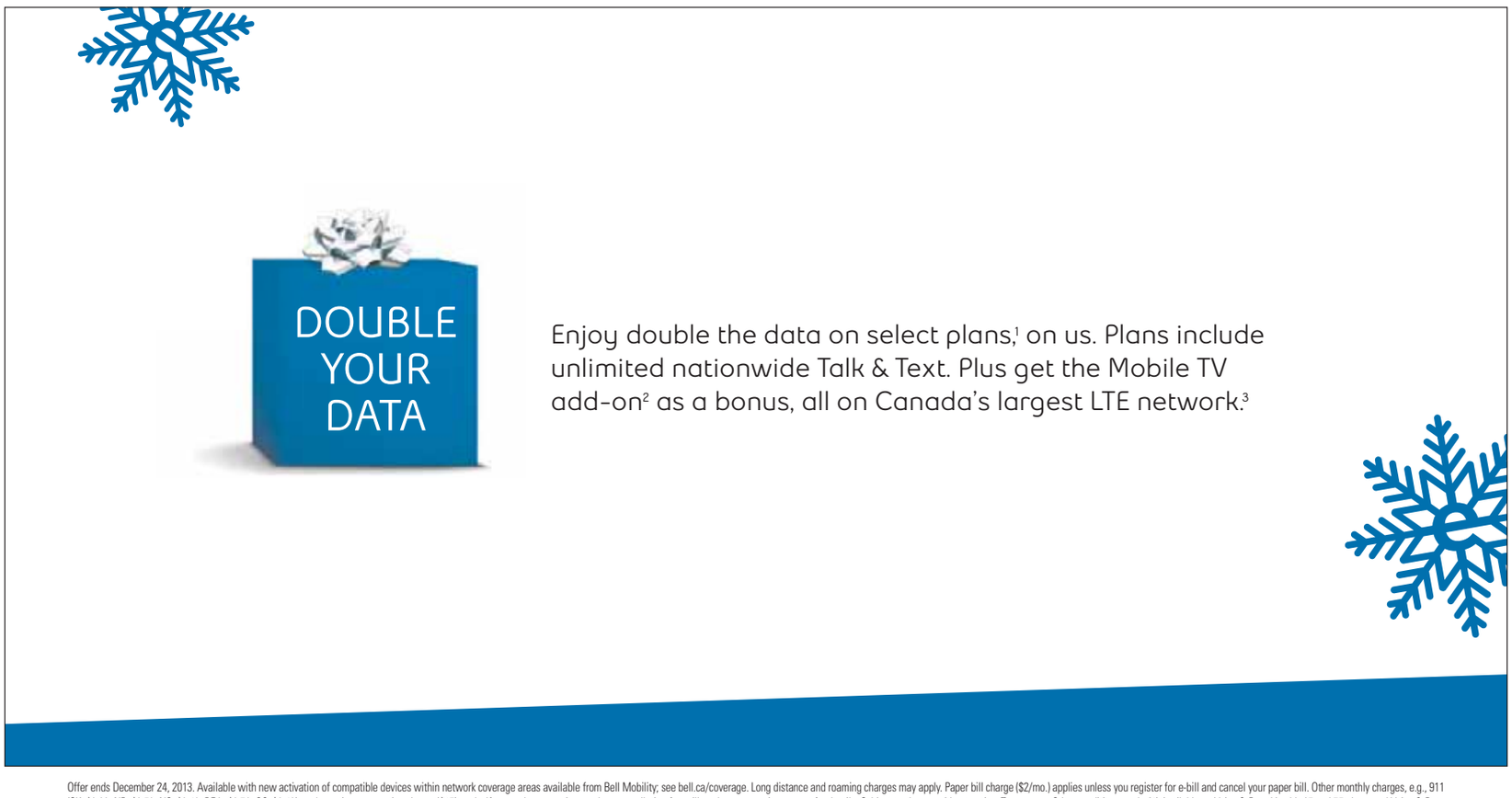
The suspension from the upper chamber — which lets Brazeau keep his health, dental and life insurance benefits — is to last for the rest of the parliamentary session, which could continue for the next two years.

The Halifax edition of Frank — not to be confused with another publication in Ottawa with the same name — said the senator would be a "pain in the arse" to his former Senate colleagues, who voted to suspend Brazeau and fellow ex-Conservative caucus members over their questionable expense claims.

The senator lamented not getting his press credentials. "I wanted to write about the news. Not make the news to be denied being able to write about it," Brazeau wrote on Twitter.

He also suggested he might appeal the decision.

THE CANADIAN PRESS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Meat. FDA makes move to phase out use of some antibiotics in livestock

Citing a potential threat to public health, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is taking steps toward phasing out the use of some antibiotics in animals processed for meat.

The agency has announced that it will ask pharmaceutical companies to voluntarily stop labelling drugs important for treating human infection as acceptable for growth promotion in animals.

If the companies sign on — and one major company has already said it will — using those antibiotics to promote growth in animals would be illegal.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Protecting humans

The FDA move is designed to limit antibiotic-resistant diseases in humans. Repeated exposure to antibiotics can lead germs to become resistant to the drug so that it's no longer effective.

London

Two Damien Hirst artworks stolen

Two Damien Hirst artworks together valued at 33,000 pounds ($57,000) have been stolen from a London art gallery, police said Wednesday.

The Metropolitan Police said the two signed prints, Pyronin Y and Oleoylsarcosin, were taken from the Exhibitionist Gallery in west London in the early hours of Monday by a thief who forced the gallery doors. The works are among Hirst's series of Spot pieces, covered in multicoloured dots.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FDA denies approval for female sexual-desire drug

Flibanserin. Daily pill is designed to increase libido in women by acting on brain chemicals linked to mood and appetite

Cindy Whitehead holds a tablet of flibanserin in her office at Sprout Pharmaceuticals in Raleigh, N.C.

ALLEN G. BREED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The multi-decade search for a pill that boosts sexual desire in women has hit another roadblock, raising questions about the future of efforts to develop a female equivalent of Viagra.

Sprout Pharmaceuticals said Wednesday it has reached an impasse with the Food and Drug Administration over its drug, flibanserin. The pill is designed to increase libido in women by acting on brain chemicals.

The FDA questions whether the drug's benefits outweigh its risks, considering its "modest" effectiveness and side effects including fatigue and nausea.

Sprout said it is appealing an October letter from the FDA that denied approval and asked for more information. But chances for approval appear slim: Of the 17 appeals FDA considered last year, 14 were denied, according to government figures.

The agency's latest rejection raises serious questions for more than a half-dozen companies working to develop therapies for women who report stress due to lack of libido. It's a market drug makers have been trying to tap since the blockbuster success of Viagra, an erectile-dysfunction drug.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"A pill just doesn't take care of it."

Dr. Virginia Sadock, psychiatrist, on the difficulties of treating female sexual dysfunction.

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6-year-old suspended

O, let me kiss that hand!

The suspension of a six-year-old boy for kissing a girl at school is raising questions about whether the peck should be considered sexual harassment.

The boy's mother said officials at Lincoln School of Science and Technology in Canon City, Colo., are overreacting. Jennifer Saunders said her son was suspended once before for kissing the girl and had other disciplinary problems.

First-grader Hunter Yelton said that he has a crush on a girl at school and she likes him back.

"It was during class, yeah. We were doing reading group, and I leaned over and kissed her on the hand. That's what happened," he said.

Saunders said she saw nothing wrong with her son's display of affection, and was shocked when the school's principal brought up the term "sexual harassment" in a meeting. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arizona officer resigns after learning she's not American

A detective for Arizona's state police force has resigned following the discovery that she was living in the country illegally after being brought to the U.S. from Mexico by her family at a young age, the agency said Wednesday.

The former detective, Carmen Figueroa, apparently was told by her family that she was born in the U.S., though she was actually born in Sinaloa, Mexico, said Department of Public Safety spokesman Bart Graves.

Figueroa's status was discovered when the State Department processed a passport application submitted by her brother, who is serving in the U.S. military, Graves said.

Figueroa, 42, resigned Monday but would have been fired if she hadn't stepped down, Graves said. A criminal investigation continues, he said.

Arizona law requires sworn police officers to be U.S. citizens, and Graves said the state police agency would have terminated her for fraud and misrepresentation for "not meeting the qualifications."

Former Arizona state police detective Carmen Figueroa. ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Figueroa was with the department for 10 years, most of that time as a Highway Patrol officer. She became a criminal investigations detective in 2010.

"She told us she was always under the impression through her mother that she was born in this country, and she did not really find out until this summer ... that she was an illegal alien through, I believe, a confrontation with her mother," Graves said.

Figueroa "had an exemplary record" and the circumstances of her departure don't put any investigations or prosecutions at risk, Graves said.

According to Graves, Figueroa previously worked for the federal Bureau of Prisons as a secretary and for the court system as a secretary and an officer. When Figueroa was hired to the state police force, she submitted a birth certificate from Texas and a driver's licence and high school diploma from California, Graves said.

There was nothing suspicious at the time about the documents, but Graves declined to discuss whether authorities now question the legitimacy of any of the papers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clashes in Kyiv escalate

A pro-European Union activist dressed as Santa Claus faces riot police at the barricade during confrontations in Independence Square in Kyiv, Ukraine, Wednesday. Security forces clashed with protesters as they began tearing down opposition barricades and tents. EFREM LUKATSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Missing heart. Marine's parents seeking damages after accidental discovery

The parents of a U.S. Marine whose body came back from Greece missing his heart have amended their federal lawsuit to add the Greek government and an Athens hospital as defendants.

Craig and Beverly LaLoup are also suing the U.S. Department of Defence over the remains of 21-year-old Sgt. Brian LaLoup. The Defence Department doesn't comment on pending litigation. Messages were left with the Greek government and state-run Evangelismos General Hospital.

LaLoup, who was assigned to a security detail at the embassy, had told a colleague he was suicidal over a breakup. The parents believe a Marine supervisor knew about his mindset but instead of getting help, took him out for drinks.

Their lawsuit alleges their son was allowed to get a weapon from a storage area later that night, despite his mood and level of intoxication, and shot himself. The U.S. government is generally immune from wrongful death lawsuits, so the family is seeking damages only over their emotional distress caused by the missing heart.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Surrendered

Defection setback for Uganda's LRA

The Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony has suffered its biggest defection in years after 19 members surrendered to an advocacy group and African Union troops hunting the insurgents in the Central African Republic, the advocacy group said. Invisible Children said in a statement the LRA members gave themselves up on Dec. 6.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frustrated Chinese citizens drink pesticide in protest

Homes demolished. Residents say they'd had enough after years of fruitless petitioning

A dozen residents of a central Chinese city protested the demolition of their homes by drinking pesticide in Beijing in a desperate bid for attention that underscores the failures of a decades-old petitioning system.

The 12 survived the protest Tuesday near a historic watchtower in the heart of China's capital after police sent them to a hospital, where they were being treated Wednesday for poisoning, said Wang Yuping, one of the residents.

Chinese petitioners sometimes are driven to extreme measures as their frustration boils over after years of unresolved grievances and routine beatings by local authorities.

Chinese citizens from Wuhan province lie on the ground after drinking pesticide near a historic watchtower in the heart of Beijing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wang, 40, and the others had travelled to Beijing from a district in Wuhan, the provincial capital of Hubei province, to draw attention to their complaints.

Wang described the protest as a group suicide attempt.

"We have been petitioning for so many years, but either we have been dragged back home or locked in secret jails and beaten, and no one has been willing to help us," Wang said by telephone. "We felt like there was no hope left."

Each petitioner drank about 50 millilitres of pesticide, Wang said, then lay down on the ground until police bundled them into vehicles and drove them to a hospital.

Wang said the petitioners have been unsuccessfully seeking redress since 2010 for the razing of their homes by local authorities who provided little or no compensation.

Local government and police offices in Wuhan could not be reached by phone. Every year in China, millions of complaints are filed about what petitioners see as injustice or incompetence by local officials. The system is criticized as ineffective and being prone to abuse. Petitioners are often met with violence when they attempt to take their cases to Beijing, with local governments sending "interceptors" to stop them — with force — and keep them in informal "black jails" until they can be sent home.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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You've got snail mail ... at the community box

Five-stage plan.
In a bid to save up to $900M a year, Canada Post will phase out door-to-door service

Canada Post is making dramatic changes to its mail services beginning next year, part of a new plan that will see door-to-door delivery phased out and postage stamp prices soar.

While some community organizations are rattled and the postal union is rallying to protect thousands of jobs, the news may barely interrupt the tweets and texts of most Canadians.

Rapid technology changes have reduced Canadians' reliance on the postal service, making the traditional daily check for the letter drop almost unnecessary in 2013. Bill payments are made online, couriers deliver parcels and, at this time of year, email inboxes are more likely than mailboxes to be overflowing with Christmas greetings.

The familiar sight of mailmen is set to become a distant memory.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

The financial situation for Canada Post has been bad for years as the Crown corporation tried to maintain a profitable business processing fewer letters, even as the number of Canadian addresses grows by about 200,000 locations each year.

On Wednesday, Canada Post unveiled a five-stage plan that will help save up to $900 million a year. The federal Crown corporation plans to phase out home delivery within the next five years by replacing delivery on foot with community mail boxes, raise postal rates and cut thousands of jobs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

@Pontifex. Pope named Person of the Year

Pope Francis on the cover of Time.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Time magazine named Pope Francis as its Person of the Year on Wednesday, saying the Catholic Church's new leader has changed the perception of the 2,000-year-old institution in an extraordinary way in a short time.

The Pope beat out NSA leaker Edward Snowden for the distinction, which the newsmagazine has been giving each year since 1927.

He has denounced the world's "idolatry of money" and the "global scandal" that nearly 1 billion people today go hungry.

His @Pontifex Twitter account recently topped 10 million followers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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IT'S CHILLY — NOT THE TASTY TYPE

HE SAYS
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Lo and be cold, it's that time of year again in Canada.

When I watch the morning forecast, some of the temperatures are best measured in Kelvin: "It will be Absolute Zero in Regina, but with the wind chill it will feel like we've passed beyond our understanding of thermodynamics, so bundle up!"

As I walk to work, my palm burns from my morning coffee but the back of my hand freezes from the coffee dripping. (In all things, moderation.)

And at work, I waste my time with YouTube videos illustrating that household pets, if tossed into the frigid air, will disintegrate into snow before they hit the ground.

N-n-n-not to put too f-f-f-fine a point on it, but it's c-c-c-cold.

It's all relative, of course — an Edmontonian accustomed to -25 C might hallucinate in the balmy -8 C of Toronto and imagine oases in the distance, frozen solid and covered in sexy skaters. Yet a friend of mine who's moved to Toronto from Vancouver was lost when she was told T.O. gets "twice as cold" as it is now.

"I don't even know what that means," she said, like somebody who'd been told they'll be murdered on Tuesday and again on Thursday.

My point being, it's best we set aside our regional differences and accept that the whole nation is a frigid wasteland — No Country for Cold Men.

Beer commercials to the contrary, most Canadian adults cower inside all winter. And when youth do go outside it results in all matter of deformities: Swollen ears and tongues stuck to metal and faces frozen solid. I once froze up so badly while waiting for a school bus that even when laughing I couldn't smile, leaving all my classmates in hysterics and providing an early cautionary tale about the dangers of Botox.

With these extreme dangers frozen in our minds, here are seven tips for any extreme-cold emergencies this winter:

1) Your home and car should have an emergency kit that includes: Warm water; Super Inferno Cinnamon Gum; one pack of erotic playing cards; a watch that runs on the cold; marshmallows; a magic hat for snowman sentience creation; plane tickets to some place warmer.

2) When lighting that furniture-fuelled bonfire in your living room, only use clean-burning natural gas.

3) Leaving your car running all winter will make those morning commutes comfy while speeding up global warming.

4) Soak wool in warm water before heading out.

5) To keep your kids warm, put all of them in the same adult-sized snowsuit and have them walk in tandem, imitating a full-sized person. Cartoon capering is also great exercise.

6) Remember to swing open your door every 10 minutes or so to see if it's gotten any warmer outside.

7) Find out what Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi's doing. He's got this.

And those are my tips. Careful you don't freeze them right off. A friendly reminder: While I've made light of the chill, hypothermia and frostbite are no laughing matter. Or maybe they are. It's so hard to tell with our faces frozen like this.

ZOOM

War, from a kid's perspective

COURTESY BRIAN MCCARTY

Photographer captures a feeling

This shot of toy missiles heading for a doll's house isn't meant for playtime — it's how a child sees war. The striking image by Hollywood photographer Brian McCarty features in his War-Toys project, which explores how conflict is perceived through the eyes of kids caught up in war and violence across the Middle East. METRO

Q and A

Toys make sense of it all

BRIAN MCCARTY
Photographer/artist, 39, based in West Hollywood, Calif.

What's your project about?
Starting back in 2011, I travelled to Israel and the Palestinian Territories to explore war from the perspective of children. I visited humanitarian organizations where children were invited to draw pictures about their lives. The resulting illustrations served as the basis for my photographs.

Why did you use toys?
As children, toys became surrogates through which we acted out aspects of the world around us. Our play allowed us to organically deconstruct what it meant to be human and digest large concepts in smaller bites. War is so dehumanizing and outside normal reality that, even as adults, we need toys to make sense of it. We need the distance provided by these plastic totems to begin seeing the actual horrors without being made numb.

Clickbait

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro Online

The digital equivalent of a rotoscope, animated GIFs are one of the oldest image formats used on the web. Invented in the 1980s, the humble GIF has since become a staple of online culture. Easy to make and even easier to share, they're the perfect platform for everything from humour to art. Most image-editing programs can make GIFs, but here are a few apps that simplify the process. Happy GIFing! Just don't get me started on how it's pronounced.

CONTRIBUTED

GifBoom:
Available on both Android and iOS, GifBoom is considered the Instagram of mobile GIF-making apps. The social features are largely optional, but the built-in GIF-maker is intuitive and lets you do things like add filters or sound.

Cinemagram:
Another cross-platform smartphone app, Cinemagram veers towards creating GIFs out of video footage. The app's appeal lies in its masking function, which allows you to select which parts of a frame are animated.

ImgFlip:
If you want to be old fashioned and make GIFs in your web browser, ImgFlip is one of the more full-featured sites. It lets you build GIFs out of either video or pictures, and includes a decent suite of editing tools.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: The home mailbox will be obsolete as @canadapostcorp ends urban delivery. What's the best way to repurpose a mailbox?

@draxapup: flower pot on every front stoop

@willems_steph: Frozen food delivery receptacle.

@Canucklehead_ca: 1) Print & delete emails. 2) Place is mailbox. 3) Take out & reply (via email) to each. (Will require retyping original email.)

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

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SCENE 2

It's a new York state of mind for the Vancouver arts scene

Celebrate. From a new theatre opening to VIFF Vancity theatre throwing haymakers to a look at the Coen Brothers, local theatre is alive and well

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

Three cheers for the York Theatre: Hip-hip hooray! Hip-hip hooray! Hip-hip hooray!

Pardon my enthusiasm — we Vancouver arts-scene types don't get to talk about a theatre opening very often.

Alas, the century-old venue has been brought back from the brink of demolition, restored and reopened by a group that includes the Wall Financial Corporation and the Cultch.

And the first production in the refurbished space is Jack & the Beanstalk: an East Van Panto. Panto, short for pantomime, is a tradition of holiday musical-comedy theatre. This particular one was written by Charlie Demers, and is co-presented by The Cultch and Theatre Replacement.

"We started the Panto talk at Theatre Replacement about six years ago — right about the same time, oddly, that kids started arriving in our worlds," says James Long, the company's artistic director. "Maiko's (one of the stars of Theatre Replacement) family started first and not long after baby number one arrived she came into the office wondering what it would take to bring together a bunch of our friends to put up something that looked like a show but felt like a party."

Patty Allen, left, Dawn Petten and Allan Zinyk as well as Raugi Yu (giant) star in An East Van Panto – Jack in the Beanstock at the re-opened York Theatre on Commercial Drive. The show runs until Dec. 29. TIM MATHESON

An opening party, it turns out. The show kicked off at the beginning of December and runs until the end of the month (Dec. 29).

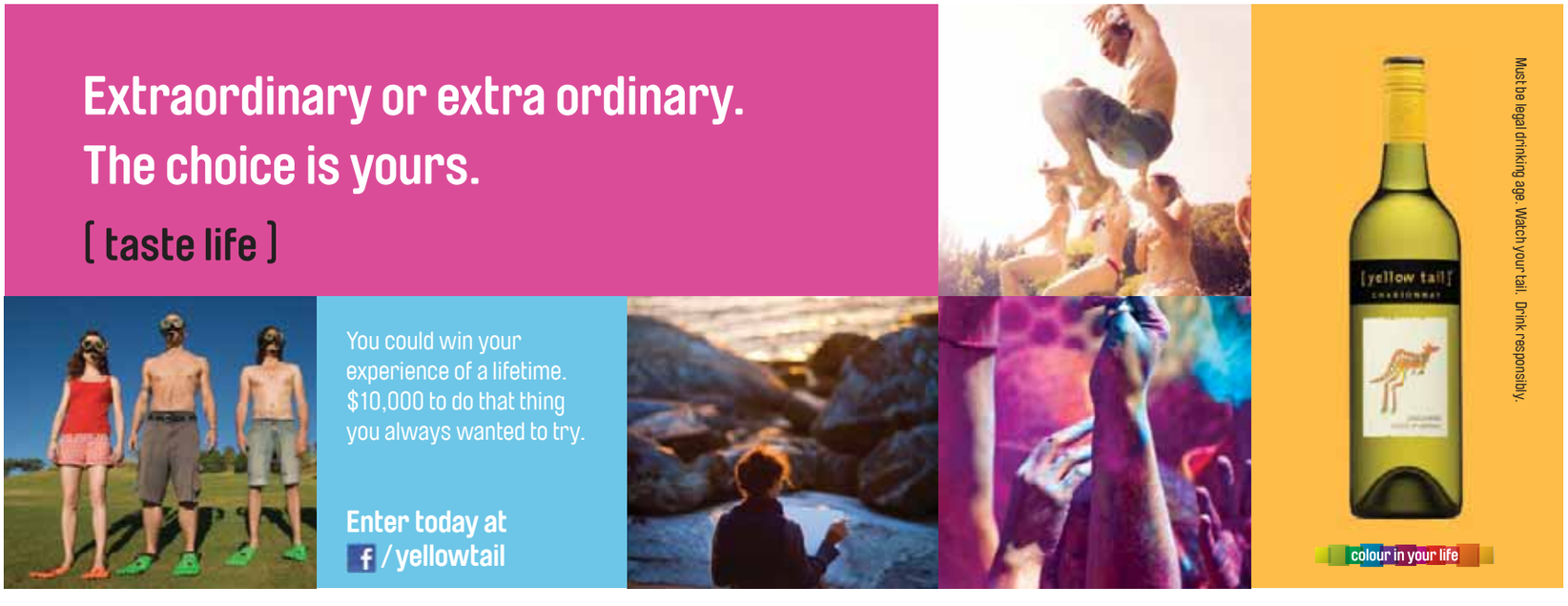
Jack & the Beanstalk: an East Van Panto is recommended for ages 5 and up. Tickets start at $18. The York Theatre is at 693 Commercial Dr. Visit TheCultch.com for more information.

Trials and Tribs

Just when you thought there couldn't possibly be more Ali stories to tell. Check out The Trials of Muhammad Ali at the VIFF Vancity Theatre from Dec. 13-19. Directed by Bill Siegel. You can find more information at VIFF.org.

Coenpalooza!

Like the Coen Brothers' films? Check out this celebration of their early work — it kicks off with a late-night screening of Blood Simple on Dec. 20 (10:15). That's followed by a five-film marathon on Saturday, Dec. 21. The classic Raising Arizona screens at 12:15 p.m., Miller's Crossing at 2 p.m., Barton Fink at 4:10, The Hudsucker Proxy at 6:30, and The Big Lebowski at 9. The Dude abides. It is all going down at the VIFF Vancity Theatre.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SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 26

DC assembles its future dream team

New 52. Writers tasked with writing a tale of how heroes change over time

The New 52: Futures End debuts on Free Comic Book Day in May. CONTRIBUTED

Nearly three years after its debut, DC Comics is pushing its New 52 five years into the future with writers Jeff Lemire, Keith Giffen, Brian Azzarello and Dan Jurgens to examine how heroes change with the passing of time and technology.

The weekly title, The New 52: Futures End, debuts on Free Comic Book Day in May with the first issue of series hitting shelves and digital storefronts later that month. It is the second such weekly book for DC in 2014. The other, Batman: Eternal, launches in the spring as DC celebrates Batman's 75th anniversary.

"Just look at the talent roster that's been gathered. How could you not want to be a part of that?" asked Giffen, who did layouts for DC's weekly comic series 52 in 2006.

Hints about the series have been dropped by DC in recent weeks, with images of Batman Beyond online as well as a mention in the DC All Access web series that saw a pair of logo designs dubbed Five Years Later.

Lemire calls the new weekly series an exploration of DC's past, present and its future.

"Really, what we're trying to do with this book is to explore the nature of what a hero is and we're doing that, obviously by playing with the future of the New 52 timeline," he said. "Past present and future all colliding in this story line."

That means exploring the past with a character like Frankenstein, the present with Firestorm and the future with Batman Beyond who is, Lemire said, making what is his first "in-continuity appearance. He'll become part of the New 52." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Super casting news

Momoa may join Batman vs. Superman cast

Jason Momoa GETTY IMAGES

Will Jason Momoa get the same harsh treatment from fanboys as Ben Affleck did?

According to the Hollywood Reporter, the Game of Thrones star, who played Khal Drogo on the first season of the hit HBO fantasy, is in talks to join the cast of Batman vs. Superman, which is fast shaping up to be a sort of Love Actually of superheroes, at least in terms of cast size.

Batman vs. Superman stars Ben Affleck as Batman, I must inform you in case you just joined the Internet today. Henry Cavill will reprise his role as Superman and newcomer Israeli actress Gal Gadot will play Wonder Woman. The production hasn't announced what role Momoa would play in the film.

Fans speculate that Momoa may be coming on board to play a villain.

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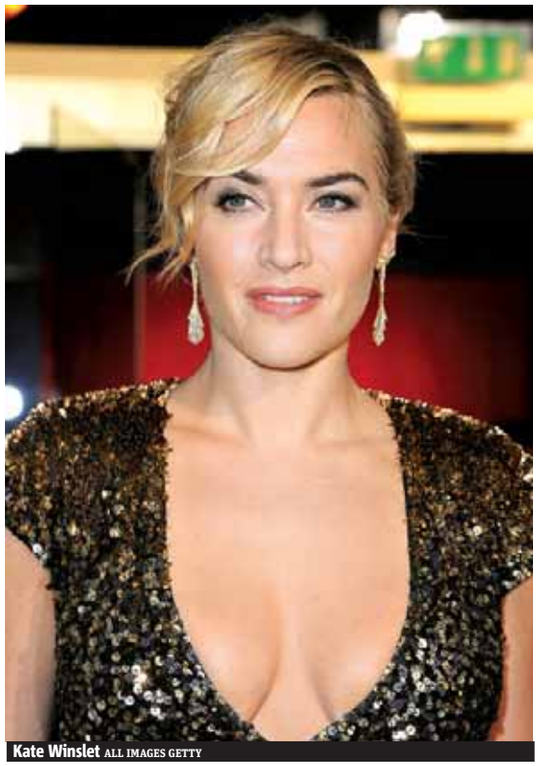
OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES



Kate Winslet ALL IMAGES GETTY

It's only baby Rocknroll but mommy Kate likes him, likes him, yes she does

Kate Winslet is a new mom once again. The Oscar winner gave birth to a son, her first kid with new husband Ned Rocknroll, Saturday in the U.K., her rep confirms to People magazine. "Baby and mother are doing great," her rep says, though more information about the boy — including his name — wasn't disclosed. Winslet also has a daughter, Mia, from her marriage to Jim Threapleton and a son, Joe, with second husband Sam Mendes.

The Word

Streisand acts as catalyst for amicable Lane and Brolin split

Diane Lane orchestrated a fairly smooth split from ex-husband Josh Brolin thanks reportedly in large part to an unlikely ally: Brolin's stepmother, Barbra Streisand. "She made it clear she would help Diane get everything she needed in her split from her own husband's son," a source tells Radar Online. "Barbra made it clear the divorce needed to go smoothly for the sake of the kids." Things went so smoothly, in fact, that Brolin reportedly turned down an offer to play Batman in the upcoming Man of Steel sequel because Lane will be reprising her role as Clark Kent's mother. "He didn't want to make Diane uncomfortable," the source says. "They're really going to be fine as a divorced couple. Josh admits he's too much of a 'bad boy' to be married to one woman, and Diane and Barbra and even his father James Brolin agree completely."

Twitter

@ElizabethHurley
Pea souper in London today.

@josswhedon
Movies teach us that a man with daddy issues is a HERO and a man with mommy issues is a sexually dysfunctional serial killer.

@TomArnold
I've officially lost 80 pounds. Now even my gay friends are complimenting me.

Demi Moore

Broken-hearted Moore ringing in the changes

Now that her divorce from Ashton Kutcher is finalized, Demi Moore is reportedly rushing to erase anything that reminds her of him from her life — including the engagement ring he got her, which she quietly sold recently, according to Star magazine. "Ashton broker her heart," a source says. "Anything that reminds her of him makes her sad, and she wants to be happy." Moore sold the five-carat, emerald-cut anonymously on consignment for $250,000, the source claims.

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Trends Report

Joseph Nogucci is an up-and-coming Canadian fashion accessories brand built by Toronto architecture and engineering students, Mario Christian and Luca Daniel. Go online to Trends Report to read about how the duo transformed sketches that were meant for buildings into designs for bracelets and beads.

Follow Irene on twitter @MetroIreneK or Instagram: kuanirene

www.metronews.ca/voices/trends-report

The year in colour

Orchid is growing on us

Radiant Orchid, a version of the purple hue is Pantone Inc.'s colour of the year for 2014. It follows this year's pick of emerald green.

Officially known as Radiant Orchid, the tropical shade is a colour-wheel contrast to green, said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute. "It's a little different, it's a little off the beaten path, and it's not a primary colour," she explains. "It's an invitation to innovation." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alice Smith doesn't 'speak makeup'

Natural woman. The soul singer loves her beauty products — she just doesn't always like wearing them. She tells us about her Ramona Quimby hair and her trick to never waking up with dry skin (hint: it rhymes with sheep).

ROMINA McGUINNESS
Metro World News

Alice Smith's second album She was released in March. ALEX ELENA

Alice Smith's deep lyrical voice is so soothing it could almost put you to sleep. Luckily, the one-time Grammy-nominee won't take offence if you do. Why? Because she believes that sleep is nature's way of helping you look pretty and fresh faced.

"Eye bags are a sign that you either need to take a break or go to sleep. So If I'm working late one night, I just make sure I drink a lot of water and go straight to bed. That's it," she explains from her home in Brooklyn. And for those rare moments when shut-eye isn't enough? "In that case I'll use a little bit of MAC Studio Finish Concealer," she adds.

Letting her skin make its own oil

"I wash my face with Sothys Cleansing Cream twice a day, and in the morning I follow up with their Hydradvance Light Hydrating Cream. I don't put anything on at night because that's when your skin is busy working and making oil. You just have to make sure you use really good stuff. So far, I've never woken up with dry skin. I also see my facialist, Mamie McDonald, about once every six weeks and she just does what she needs to do. I always leave with a really clean face!'

Not needing foundation – ever

"I love makeup, but I don't speak makeup. I don't wear a lot of it because it's not good for your complexion. But if I feel a little washed out, I'll do my eyebrows up a little and put some mascara on. But I never wear foundation — ever. Definitely not when I'm on stage. I want to be able to touch my face and it's not like I'm a big sweater, but I might sweat. So I just don't see the point. When I'm performing, I stick to brows, lashes and lips. I love a burnt sienna lipstick but you have to be really feeling it to pull such a bold colour off. And I always carry a tin of Burt's Bees Beeswax Lip Balm with me."

Her 'Ramona Quimby' hair

"I used to dye my hair in college and it was like orange! I don't think it was meant to be that colour…but I liked it. I had a fringe and a short bob, which made me look like Ramona Quimby! I'd love to dye my hair again but I think I'm just afraid of how it would turn out."

Her new album She and making it through the music industry unscathed

"It feels like a lifetime ago that I released my first album but I've always had a lot of support. My family and my friends have always been there for me. I'm not any different. I think I'm just older. I have a three-year-old daughter now, and she's made me re-evaluate and re-examine who I am and who I need to be. For me it's about what kind of person I'm trying to encourage her to be — how to be successful, how to care for herself. And because the only way to teach things is to show, I need to be able to show her how to do all that."

Her beauty icons

"I love Sade…I've always thought she was so beautiful."

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Critters all through the house

Pawed, clawed, tailed, scaled, beaked, snouted, winged and web-footed: Animals are a delight at any time of year, but what better season than Christmas to have a merry menagerie about? Add creatures big and small to your holiday decor scheme, or give a gilded beast as a gift. This year, it's a snap to source your choice of fauna in two favourite finishes, white or gold.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Ommm... with the right pose and a trendy gold finish, I get a good vibe from this guy. Yoga Frog, $40, pier1.com.

Create wintery-wild drinks with this Polar Bear Cocktail Shaker, $92, potterybarn.com.

From the designer's debut collection of animal curiosities, Kate Spade New York's Woodland Park Cat/Dog Salt & Pepper Set, $30, thebay.com.

Add some fine swine style to your bookcases. Gold Pig Bookends, $35, cb2.com.

Adorable and shiny, this bear keeps your coins safe. Sleeping Bear Bank, $18 US, urbanoutfitters.com.

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Mackeroons take it back to historic foodie basics

This recipe makes 80 mackeroons. ALL IMAGES: PAT CROCKER, FROM SETTING A FINE TABLE: HISTORICAL DESSERTS AND DRINKS FROM THE OFFICERS' KITCHENS AT FORT YORK (WHITECAP BOOKS)

"Today, mackeroons (now spelled macaroons) are a meringue made with coconut, but until the mid-19th century they contained finely chopped or pounded sweet almonds," notes Setting A Fine Table. "Recipes for mackeroons appeared frequently in 17th- and 18th-century cookery books, with varying ratios of sugar to egg whites. Mackeroons were served with wines and liqueurs, or were crushed and layered in trifles or with ... creams.

"Orange blossom water and rosewater, both made by steeping the flower blossoms in brandy or distilled water, were characteristic flavourings for this biscuit (cookie).

"By the mid-19th century, vanilla had displaced these flavourings."

Modern Ingredients

- 3 cups (750 ml) whole blanched almonds
- 4 medium egg whites (1/2 cup/125 ml)
- 2 tsp (10 ml) orange flower water
- 2 cups (500 ml) superfine granulated sugar

Historic recipe

1. Take a pound of almonds, let them be scalded, blanched, and thrown into cold water, then dry them in a cloth, and pound them in a mortar, moisten them with orange-flower water, or with the white of an egg, lest they turn to oil; afterwards, take an equal quantity of fine powder sugar, with three or four whites of eggs, and a little musk, beat all well together, and shape them on wafer-paper, with a spoon round: bake them in a gentle oven on tin plates. **THE ART OF COOKERY MADE PLAIN AND EASY (HANNAH GLASSE, 1796)**

Modern Equivalent

1. Line 2 rimless baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. In a food processor, chop the almonds, scraping down the sides of the bowl from time to time, until they are the consistency of very coarse sand with some slightly larger pieces. Set aside.

3. In a separate large bowl, beat the egg whites with the orange flower water until soft peaks form. Add the sugar about 2 tbsp (30 ml) at a time, beating until stiff peaks form. Sprinkle the chopped almonds over the egg white mixture and fold in to distribute evenly.

4. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls (6 ml) about 1 inch (2. 5 cm) apart onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake in the centre of a 325 F (160 C) oven until they are dry to the touch, but still white, and lift easily off the parchment paper, about 12 to 15 minutes.

5. Let cool on the pans on a rack. **RECIPE EXCERPTED FROM SETTING A FINE TABLE: HISTORICAL DESSERTS AND DRINKS FROM THE OFFICERS' KITCHENS AT FORT YORK" (WHITECAP BOOKS) EDITED BY ELIZABETH BAIRD AND BRIDGET WRANICH**

Cookbook of the Week

Travel back in time to update classics

Toronto's Fort York is seeped in history but often overlooked is the food element of the times.

Edited by Elizabeth Baird and Bridget Wranich, Setting a Fine Table is a selection of recipes from Fort York.

The dishes, from the officers' kitchen in the Fort, take readers back to a time when food was not only made locally, but found locally — off the land. The 30 recipes include the original, historic recipe as well as its modern equivalent.

Among the recipes included are Chocolate Cream, Pears Portuguese Fashion with Currants, and more. **METRO**

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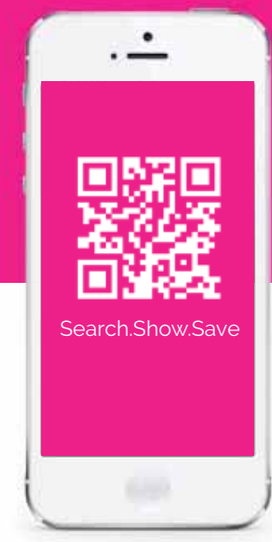

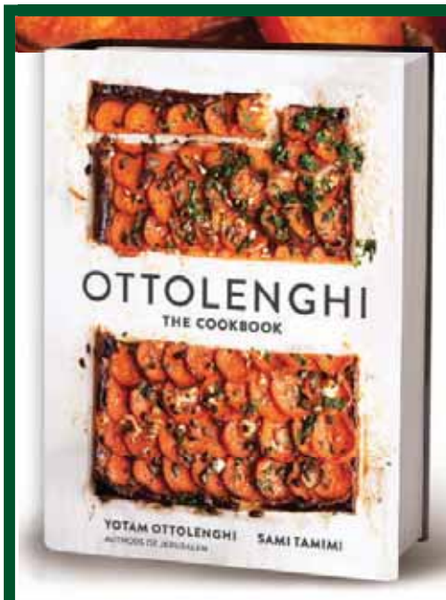

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metro
HOLIDAY FUN
Thursday, December 12, 2013

Skiing, downhill or cross-country, is just one way to get outside and take advantage of winter activities during the holiday season. COLOURBOX

Warm up to these activities

JASON MENARD
For Metro

The weather outside may, at times, be frightful, but that doesn't mean you can't make the most of the winter season. Whether you are with that special someone or a group of old friends, there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the winter weather.

So, without further ado, here are a few fun activities designed to help adults make the most out of the winter weather.

A walk through the park: There is something about the magic of lightly falling snow at night reflected in the lights alongside a park path.

Skating: Most cities have wonderful outdoor skating facilities if you are just looking for a casual skate with that special someone. And if you want to get a crew together, you can rent an hour or two of ice at the local rink and engage in a game of shinny.

Skiing: Cross-country or downhill, Canadians have learned to conquer the snow by strapping on thin planks to their feet and going really, really fast.

Help out at a charity: The holiday season, in particular, represents a great time for people to give back. Whether it's helping out at a food bank for a new year's resolution, or sharing Christmas at a soup kitchen, your generosity can truly make it a winter wonderland for many people in need.

Decorate your home: As long as you don't go all Griswold, decorating your home with lights is a gift that gives to everyone in your neighbourhood.

Go ice fishing: If the ice is thick enough in your neck of the woods, ice fishing is a surprisingly popular and relaxing activity.

Help a neighbour shovel their walk: It may not seem fun, but the satisfaction of helping an elderly neighbour out sure feels good.

Enjoy some mulled wine or apple cider: Or if hot chocolate is your drink, that's OK, too. And, as an adult, no one will mind if you decide to make that beverage a little more "festive" as you enjoy your holiday cheer.

Sure, you can curse the winter weather and spend a few months in a self-imposed cocoon, but with so many amazing winter opportunities out there, you owe it to yourself to see why cold-weather activities can really warm you up.

Enjoy a casual skate during the holidays. MARIDAV/SHUTTERSTOCK

unwind
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Holiday Inn

Winter can be snow much fun

JASON MENARD
For Metro

Keep kids busy during the holidays with some of the following activities.

Skating: Most cities have one or more public outdoor rinks. There is nothing like the experience of skating outside and it's a great way to spend some quality time with your children. If the weather isn't co-operating, most rinks also offer public skating opportunities.

Snow fort/snowball fights: If the snow is the right type and there's enough of it, why not head out to the park or your backyard and introduce your kids to the joys of building (and defending) a snow fort. And if you get too tired, feel free to lie down and make snow angels.

Tobogganing: Whether you prefer the traditional wooden sleds, have invested in one of those high-tech versions, or are willing to throw caution to the wind with those crazy carpets, all you need to do is head off to the nearest hill and throw yourself down it.

Winter sports: We often think about hockey, but there are many other winter sports you may want to attend as a spectator. From basketball to roller derby, there is usually a game somewhere.

Make a bird feeder: You can buy one at the store or make one out of a pine cone. But however you do it, those hungry birds will appreciate it.

Attend a winter carnival: Most communities have some sort of event during the winter. Get together with neighbours, take the kids, and make an annual event of it.

But no matter what you do, don't forget to spend a few minutes afterwards recapping the event and spending some quality time with your kid or kids bonding over a cup of hot chocolate.

Tobogganing can be a fun family bonding experience during the holidays. CATHERINE YEULET/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

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CELEBRATION

KENSINGTON GARDENS CARNIVAL

CONTRIBUTED

More than 5,000 people from across Metro Vancouver gathered for some old-fashioned family fun at the Kensington Gardens Carnival Nov. 23.

They gathered to celebrate the opening of the presentation centre for the most anticipated real estate development in the Kensington-Cedar Cottage neighbourhood — Kensington Gardens.

The festivities were held on the site of the future master-planned community, which will take up an entire city block at 2220 Kingsway in Vancouver.

Visitors enjoyed an on-site food truck festival, magic shows, hoops and silks acrobatic performances by Blink-Acro, live music performances by the Famous Players Band and local rising star Kuba Oms, face painting, balloon twisting, appearances by legendary Canucks goalie Kirk McLean, Miss Chinese pageant contestants, local radio personalities and more.

"We were wowed by the turnout," says Alexa Paukkunen, sales and marketing director for Kensington Gardens. "It shows just how welcome this new development will be in the neighbourhood, and just how poised this community is to grow and blossom.

"This is a very positive story, not only for the project, but for the market and real estate in Vancouver in general."

The celebration was the most sensational real estate event Vancouver has seen in almost a decade, Paukkunen says.

"The last time Vancouver responded with this enthusiasm to a real estate event was for Westbank's Woodwards redevelopment in 2006."

Carnival guests were given a savings certificate valid for up to $20,000 on the purchase of a new home at Kensington Gardens. Call the presentation centre to learn more about how you can take advantage of $20,000 in early purchase incentives, which is available for a limited time only.

The Kensington Gardens presentation centre is open daily from noon to 5 p.m. (closed Fridays) at 2220 Kingsway (at Gladstone). Look for the bright pink signs.

Sales of the first release have now commenced. Call the sales team at 604-620-7886 for more details.

SOLID HISTORY

Built by Westbank, a developer with a reputation for quality, Kensington Gardens promises to bring world-class homes to Vancouver's burgeoning Kensington-Cedar cottage neighbourhood.

Westbank has built other well-known developments in Vancouver, including the Shangri-La, the Shaw Tower, Telus Garden and the Fairmont Pacific Rim.

The development's concrete construction, air conditioned homes, geothermal heating and cooling, and German-imported kitchens and appliances speak volumes about the quality of the homes.

Lifestyle is another major factor in that quality, says Alexa Paukkunen, sales and marketing director for Kensington Gardens. In addition to the luxurious homes, the mixed-use development will be home to retail and service options and five-star amenities of which residents can take advantage.

Convenient transportation nearby will take residents anywhere they need to go in the city. Transportation options include SkyTrain, bus routes and bike routes.

FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY

The crowds that flocked to the Kensington Gardens Carnival Nov. 23 had the opportunity to experience the richness of the Kensington-Cedar cottage community, enjoying music, food and entertainment. But they also had the chance to explore the newly unveiled presentation centre and satisfy their curiosity about Kensington Gardens.

"This event was a way for us to say hello to our new neighbours and invite them to see what we're all about," says Alexa Paukkunen, sales and marketing director for Kensington Gardens.

Kensington Gardens homes range from one bedrooms to three bedroom and dens, and everything in between. The new presentation centre features a two-bedroom-and-den display home with luxury fixtures and finishings that will come standard in homes at the development.

Practical and beautiful, the kitchens will offer contemporary cooking spaces with German-imported Nobilia cabinetry, elegant, wide-plank engineered wood flooring, durable Corian countertop, polished chrome faucets, and back-painted glass tile backsplashes.

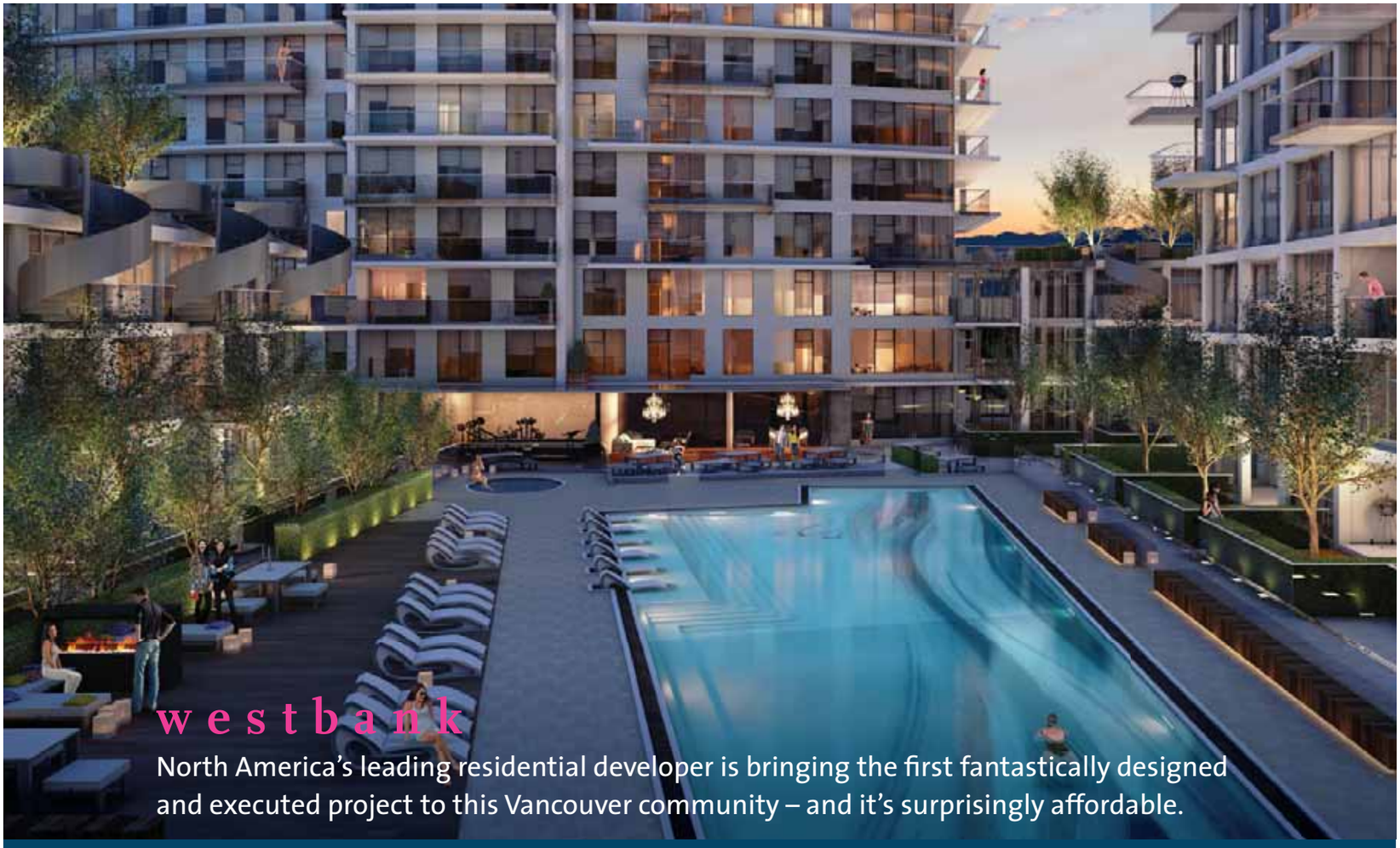
The development isn't just for those who are looking for luxury. It's built to last with durability and practicality.

"Kensington Gardens is a development for people of all stripes, but families were at the heart of our design," Paukkunen says.

CONTRIBUTED

The development's West Tower has homes designed for many different lifestyles, from singles buying their first homes to families looking for room to grow to seniors looking to downsize.

Register at kensingtongardens.ca to stay in the know and be the first to find out about upcoming special offers.



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CONTRIBUTED

DO YOU HAVE A GREEN THUMB?

JADE OFFERS GARDEN SUITES IN RICHMOND

First-time homebuyers rarely get the chance to own a home with a yard, but with the one-bedroom garden suites available at Jade, a new development in Richmond, first-time homebuyers can make that dream a reality.

"One-bedroom garden suites are a rare offering," says Charan Sethi, president of Tien Sher Group of Companies and developer of Jade. "Whether you have a green thumb, love to hold a barbecue or just enjoy having that green space right outside your patio door, Jade's offerings are ideal for new homebuyers."

The development has garden suites starting at $258,800. The 17 three-bedroom townhomes start at $576,800. The garden suites have radiant floor heating included. Homes start selling in January 2014.

"Another special feature about Jade is that buyers have the flexibility to choose several upgrade options to customize their home and make it unique, including solar panel system, custom paint colours, and more," Sethi says.

Jade is located in the quiet McLennan North neighbourhood in the heart of Richmond, with close proximity to several acres of trails, kids' playgrounds and picnic areas.

"The location is just far enough out of the way for residents to enjoy their quiet, privacy and green space, while, at the same time, downtown Richmond is just minutes away," Sethi says.

For more, visit Jadeliving.com.

SELECT HOMES AVAILABLE AT QUATTRO

CONTRIBUTED

Surrey is a city that's evolving at an incredible rate, and its housing should be evolving along with it, says Charan Sethi, president of the Tien Sher Group of Companies. Tien Sher is the developer of Quattro 3, a new development based in downtown Surrey.

"At Quattro 3, those needs are provided for," he says.

Homes in the six-storey, 164-unit development start at $159,900 for a junior one-bedroom. Quattro is more than 85 per cent sold with select one- and two-bedrooms still available.

The increasing diversity of the area calls for a mix of homes that cater to many different lifestyles, which was what Quattro 3 was designed to do.

Amidst the urban density, developments also need to be able to offer parks and other public areas for residents to enjoy, Sethi says. That's why Quattro 3 is part of a master-planned community that includes green space, walkways and shareable space for residents to gather.

A third factor is that today's urban homes need to be accessible to the city, with everything residents need within walking distance, eliminating the need for a car. Quattro 3 is part of the new city centre and only a seven-minute walk away from the Gateway Skytrain station.

The Quattro discovery centre is open daily (except Fridays) from noon to 5 p.m., at #114-10768 Whalley Blvd. in Surrey. For more, visit tiensher.com or call the Quattro sales team at 604-581-8000.

BALANCE COMFORT AND COST

Living in the centre of the city provides access to unparalleled culture and amenities, but all that access doesn't mean much unless it's paired with affordability. Enter Balance, a new development by Tien Sher in the heart of Surrey's new up-and-coming downtown.

The micro condos are Canada's smallest condos. What they lack in square footage they more than make up for in comfort, cost and accessibility, says Charan Sethi, president of Tien Sher Group of Companies and developer of Balance.

"We wanted to find a solution to the increasing population density and rising home prices in Metro Vancouver," Sethi says. "Construction has begun and the homes will be ready for fall 2014."

The four-storey micro-unit condo development has 48 micro units that range between 301 and 649 square feet. Seven one-bedrooms and one two-bedroom remains, and prices start at just $126,900. Nine homes are available at less than $139,900.

For more, visit tiensher.com, or reach the Balance sales team at 604-424-8900.

QUEENSBOROUGH IS A HIDDEN GEM

When you are looking for a place to raise a family, consider New Westminster, says Charan Sethi, president of Tien Sher Group of Companies.

"The city's neighbourhoods have a strong community feeling," he says.

That's just one of the factors that's drawing buyers to English Mews 2, a development of townhomes in New Westminster's Queensborough region.

Three-bedroom townhomes at English Mews start from $415,900, a much lower price than similar homes located in nearby Richmond, which easily sell for $600,000 and more, Sethi says.

There are only two homes left to sell in the final phase which will be move-in ready for February 2014. The sales and show home, located at #22-Ewen Ave., in New Westminster, will be closing Dec. 22, so hurry in today. The show home is open daily from noon to 5 p.m. except Fridays. Visit tiensher.com for more, or call the sales team at 604-517-1688.

Last chance for pre-construction pricing at English Mews2. Sales centre and showhome closes for good December 23nd. Our 3 bedroom townhomes start at only $415,900 and are ready to move into February 2014!

www.englishmews.com Open Daily 12 Noon to 5pm (except Friday)

ENGLISH MEWS 2

*Ask sales representative for more information. Subject to qualification.

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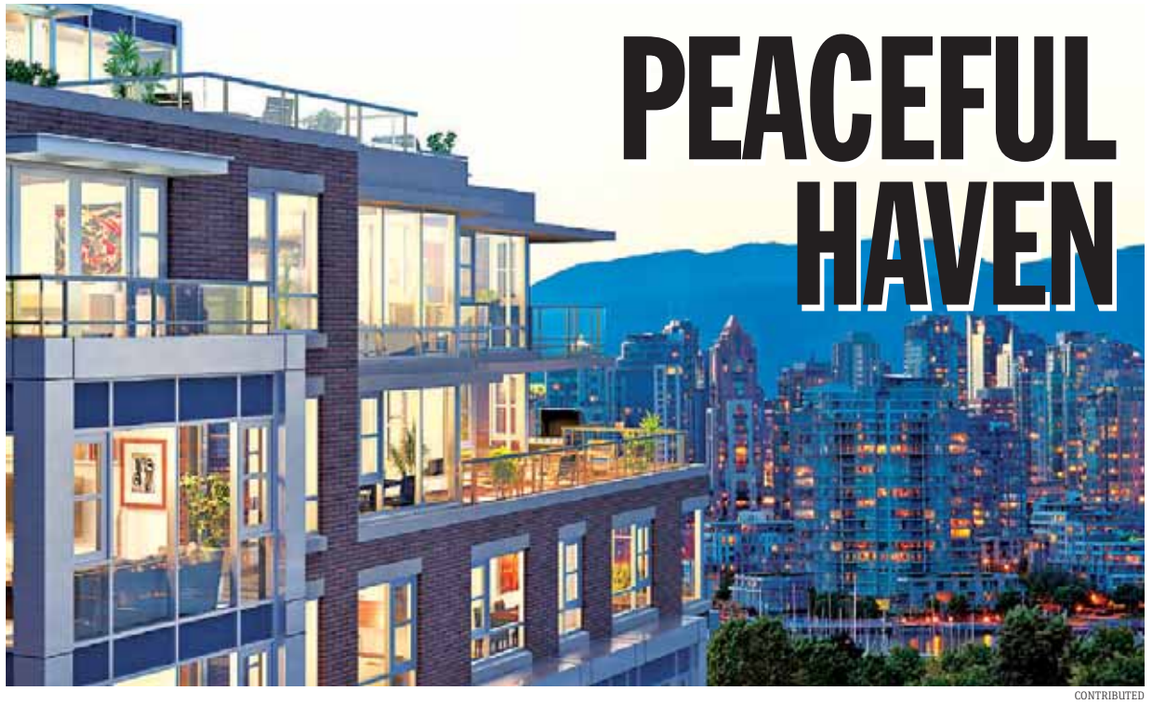

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PEACEFUL HAVEN

GET ANYWHERE YOU WANT QUICKLY

You don't need to own a car at Cambie+7. The new condo development is located just off the beaten path near the heart of Cambie Village in Vancouver, and it couldn't provide more accessibility to the city.

Walking, bicycling and taking public transit are the easiest ways to get around when you live at Cambie+7. The development is located on a designated bicycle route, and it's a short walk to downtown over the Cambie Street Bridge.

But perhaps the biggest advantage to getting around when you live at Cambie+7 are the Vancouver City Hall and Olympic Village SkyTrain stations, each located less than a five-minute walk away. Hop on either and get straight into downtown in less than five minutes, or head out to Richmond in less than 20 minutes.

CAMBIE+7 IS A GREAT ADDITION TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Sometimes a neighbourhood comes along that strikes just the right balance between city and village. In Vancouver, Cambie Village is that neighbourhood.

Cambie Village is an up-and-coming community that has grown significantly in the past five years or so — it's a prospect that's very appealing to buyers.

Yuanheng's new development Cambie+7 ("Cambie and Seven"), is located at Cambie Street and 7th Avenue, right at the centre of the action. Cambie Village is centred around the intersection of Broadway and Cambie, just south of the Cambie Street Bridge that crosses to downtown Vancouver.

This is Vancouver's biggest hub outside of downtown, so it's a great place to buy a condo.

Though Cambie+7 is down the block from a major thoroughfare, the development faces a quiet street. Seventh Avenue is tree-lined, traffic-calmed and mainly a route for pedestrians and cyclists.

As soon as residents walk onto 7th Avenue from Cambie, the area becomes a peaceful haven for residents.

The Cambie Village started burgeoning after the announcement that the Canada Line SkyTrain would be built along Cambie Street. Since the opening of the line directly before the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, the area has become a hub for restaurants, services and retailers big and small.

Cambie+7 residents won't need to go downtown for essentials. They will find an abundance in their own neighbourhood, including Starbucks, Whole Foods, Save On Foods, Best Buy, Home Depot and Canadian Tire just around the corner.

When residents are looking for a walk and green space, Charleston Park is a five-minute walk away. Granville Island and its many amenities are also located close by, and are a perfect place to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Cambie+7 has easy access to the best Vancouver has to offer.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS DRAWN TO NEIGHBOURHOOD'S ACCESSIBILITY

The key to any good condo development is diversity, and Cambie+7 has that in spades, catering to many different demographics.

Yuanheng Canada, the developer of Cambie+7, has had everyone from singles to young families to downsizing seniors buy there. However, they have particularly noticed that young professionals are appreciating what the development has to offer.

Many young professionals who already live and work in the area have been buying at Cambie+7 because the development is so accessible to their workplaces. Several Vancouver General Hospital professionals have already bought units. Their workplace is just a 10-minute walk away.

Those who work downtown also have the advantage of accessibility to their workplaces. Since Cambie+7 is a short walk from the Cambie Street Bridge leading into downtown Vancouver, the commute is short and sweet.

Many renters in the area are at a point where they want to buy a home, and they are looking to stay in the same area. The area's vibrancy and its growth are both factors that make Cambie+7 a great investment.

The Cambie+7 development is a collection of 57 condos in a concrete tower, plus seven townhomes. The condos range from one- to three-bedroom, and from 460 to 1,011 square feet, and the majority of homes are priced at less than $439,900.

CONTRIBUTED

Residents are looking for the same quality in the interiors as they are in the neighbourhood. The condos high-quality interior specifications, including marble flooring in the bathrooms, quartz countertops in the kitchen and bathrooms, Fisher & Paykel appliances including a gas range and a fully integrated Fagor fridge. Flooring is high-quality wide-plank laminate.

If there isn't time to get to the nearby Seawall for exercise, residents will also have access to a fitness centre and lounge in the development.

CAMBIE+7

Live the New Cambie Excitement

Priced from

$400,000

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UP TO $10,000.00

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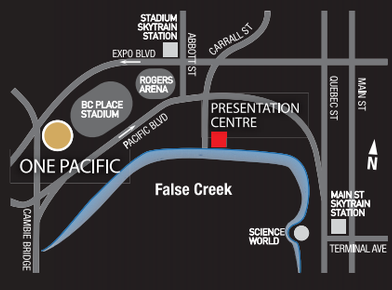
ONE PACIFIC

One Pacific, the first development in False Creek Central, is the fastest selling project in town with over 300 suites now sold. With 2 international hotels, convention facilities, 90,000 sq. ft. of retail amenities and the existing BC Place and Rogers Arena, False Creek Central is destined to become Vancouver's most glamourous and lively neighbourhood. One Pacific is situated in the middle of it all and is just one block from the waterfront and Yaletown. The Riviera Deck features a host of extraordinary amenities including a stunning overhanging glass swimming pool, hot tub, gourmet kitchen with tasting bar and grand dining hall. On the Sky Garden level there is a rooftop garden, barbecue and dining area. The luxury begins with the grand lobby and concierge, extends throughout the amenities spaces and into every suite with over height ceilings, air conditioning, integrated Miele appliances and a selection of opulent finishes. All of this, together with the on-site retail – a café, restaurant and a 25,000 sq. ft. state of the art athletic club – ensures One Pacific residents receive a genuine 5-star living experience.

LiveOnePacific.com 604.899.8800

1 Bedroom + Flex Room from $309,900
2 Bedroom + Flex Room from $499,900



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Open Daily:
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All illustrations reflect the artist's interpretation of the project and do not take into account neighbouring buildings, physical structures, streets and landscape. These matters will be governed by the terms of the applicable Disclosure Statement in each case. Prices and availability are subject to change without notice. Prices quoted are exclusive of any tax and may reflect various inclusions or exclusions in the offer including but not limited to finishing details and parking provisions. Please check with the Developers' representatives for further details. This is not an offering for sale. Any such offer may only be made with the applicable Disclosure Statement and Agreement of Purchase and Sale. Concord One Pacific Limited Partnership.

CONCORD PACIFIC

Golf

Canadian tour to start out on the West Coast

The first swing of the 2014 PGA Tour Canada season will take place in Vancouver.

The PC Financial Open, the opening event of the season, will be held at Point Grey Golf and Country Club, from May 26 to June 1, the PGA Tour Canada announced in a press release on Wednesday on its website.

"Sports fans in Vancouver will have the opportunity to watch some great golf as our players compete on the superb Point Grey golf course as they begin their quest to be one of The Five that earn Web.com Tour status," said PGA Tour Canada president Jeff Monday in a statement.

The tour is expecting a field of 156 competitors at Point Grey, located along the Fraser River in south Vancouver.

A full PGA Tour Canada schedule for next season has yet to be announced.

The top five players on the tour's money list at the end of the season earn status on the Web.com Tour.

This past season, Abbotsford's Nick Taylor just missed out on earning his Web.com Tour ticket for the 2014 season, after placing seventh in the PGA Tour Canada money list — just a little more than $3,000 short of a top-five finish.

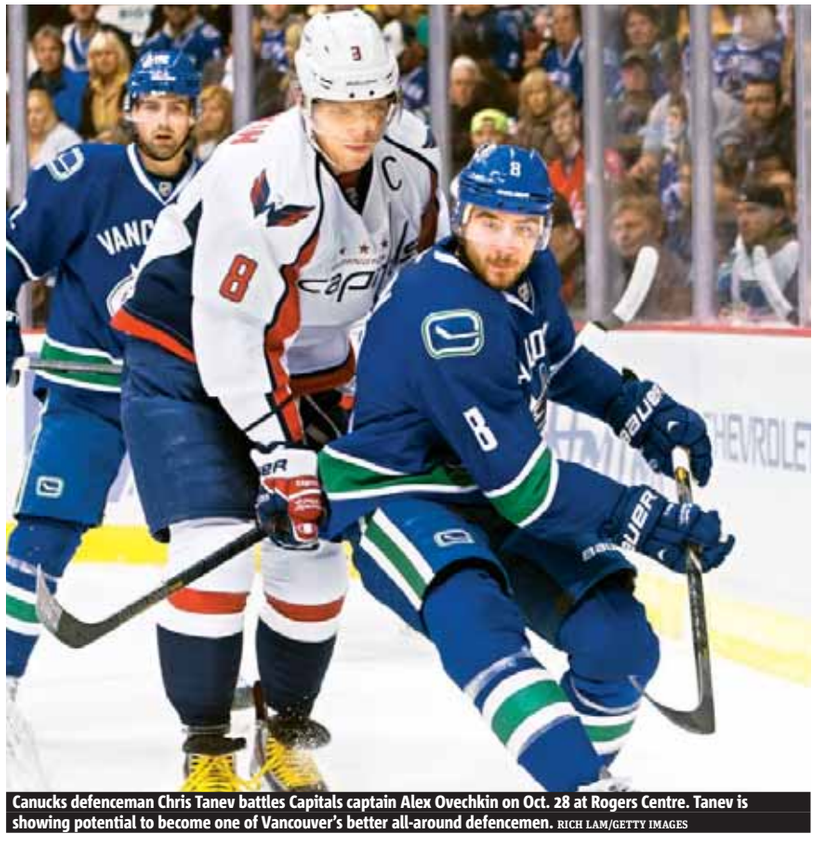
Graduates of the Canadian tour include Abbotsford's Adam Hadwin and Graham DeLaet of Weyburn, Sask., who is ranked 36th in the Official World Golf Ranking.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Young Tanev steady presence on blue-line

NHL. He's not flashy, but Toronto native is getting plenty of props from coach Tortorella

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca



Canucks defenceman Chris Tanev battles Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin on Oct. 28 at Rogers Centre. Tanev is showing potential to become one of Vancouver's better all-around defencemen. RICH LAM/GETTY IMAGES

He won't blow you away with a heavy slapshot like Jason Garrison. He doesn't fight like Kevin Bieksa. He doesn't lay out opponents with bone-rattling body checks like Alex Edler.

Yet Chris Tanev's stock continues to rise as a member of the Vancouver Canucks defensive corps, thanks to his ability to skate, block shots and play a cerebral style of hockey that allows him to avoid the opposition and move the puck cleanly to his teammates.

There's nothing fancy or exciting about his game. But, paired mostly with veteran Dan Hamhuis, Tanev has fit almost seamlessly into John Tortorella's system and brand of hockey, playing upwards of 20 minutes a night.

And that includes the art of shot blocking.

He has 61 through 33 games, which puts him into a tie for second on the team with Bieksa.

Tanev has come to accept blocking shots as something he has to do. He's taken a few off the foot and been shaken up as a result here and there.

His most recent reward for constantly throwing his body in front of flying vulcanized rubber was a goal — his second of the season — in the club's 2-0 win over Carolina on Monday.

Tanev is only 23 years of age, re-signed this summer to a one-year contract worth a cap hit of $1.5 million.

He's already eclipsed his career-high point total from last season, and becoming more of a threat in the offensive zone is a step the Canucks want to see him take.

"We always want our (defence) involved in the offence. We'll let him take his time. He's still a young kid," said Tortorella after Monday's game.

"He has played really well defensively. That's the No. 1 role for him right now, is to make sure he grows defensively and then he'll allow himself to get it going offensively."

The Canucks, after two days off, return to full team practice on Thursday.

Their next game is Friday against the Edmonton Oilers at Rogers Arena.

Whitecaps trade Knighton to Revolution

The Whitecaps traded goalkeeper Brad Knighton to the New England Revolution ahead of Thursday's MLS Re-Entry Draft. VICTOR DECOLONGON/GETTY IMAGES

The Vancouver Whitecaps announced last month the club would not be picking up the option year of Brad Knighton's contract.

On Wednesday, the club announced it traded Knighton, the 28-year-old goalkeeper, to the New England Revolution, one day ahead of the MLS Re-Entry Draft, which he was eligible for.

As per the MLS Players Union, Knighton made $68,600 in guaranteed compensation this past season.

Knighton foreshadowed the news on Twitter, tweeting out: "Everything happens for a reason....Couldn't be more excited for what lies ahead..."

He joined Vancouver in January 2012, coming from the Carolina RailHawks of the North American Soccer League.

He began that season as the backup behind Joe Cannon, but eventually took over the starting duties to start September. He then started the club's first ever MLS Cup playoff game against the L.A. Galaxy.

He once again found himself in the backup role to begin the 2013 season, beaten out for the No. 1 job by Cannon. He regained his starting job, then lost it again in August, as the club decided to utilize David Ousted.

He'll now return to New England, where he started his MLS career.

"This is a great opportunity for Brad to go back to New England, where he has played before and has a chance to be a starting goalkeeper in this league," said Whitecaps president Bob Lenarduzzi in a statement. CAM TUCKER/METRO

4 SPORTS

Chan channeling inner child for Winter Games

Figure skating. Canadian Olympian returns to his roots ahead of Sochi 2014

Toronto's Patrick Chan performs at the Grand Prix Final competition in Fukuoka, Japan, last Thursday. SHIZUO KAMBAYASHI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barely 24 hours after flying home from Japan, Patrick Chan was in a Toronto rink inspiring young skaters.

The three-time world champion wasn't thrilled with his silver-medal performance at the Grand Prix Final last week in Fukuoka, and spending time with kids was perhaps just what he needed.

"It's great, it's awesome," Chan said with a wide grin. "It's funny because this season for me is all about going back to my roots, and kind of finding the inner kid in me. In order to deal with the pressures of this Olympic year, I kind of had to go back and identify why I skated, and why it's so much fun and why I enjoy it."

Chan was a surprise guest at the evening skating practice, part of his new role as an ambassador for active living for Coca-Cola Canada, a new sponsor. Coca-Cola announced Wednesday it was sponsoring Chan plus Tampa Bay Lightning forward Steven Stamkos and short-track speed skater Marianne St-Gelais.

Chan talked to the young skaters about keeping it fun, and answered questions on everything from how he stays motivated, to when he landed his first Axel (he was nine or 10, he can't quite recall), to how he keeps from getting nervous (he still gets nervous).

The Toronto skater will carry huge expectations into the Sochi Olympics. He's a favourite to win Canada's first ever Olympic gold in men's singles.

Chan, who was fifth at the Vancouver Games four years ago, said part of him is already thinking past the Olympics — more specifically, about what he can give back.

Chan has a couple of days off then will head back to Detroit to prepare for the Canadian championships in early January in Ottawa. Then he makes the final push to Sochi.

He won't take a Christmas vacation this season.

"No Hawaii this time, I won't have a suntan at nationals," he said. "I think all the skaters are staying in Detroit for Christmas, like Kaitlyn (Weaver) and Andrew (Poje). It will be great, we'll make our own little Christmas party or New Year's party."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Women's hockey

Poulin's return on hold for U.S. clash

Canada is riding a three-game winning streak against the U.S. in women's hockey, but it hasn't been all smooth sailing for the Canadian women this winter.

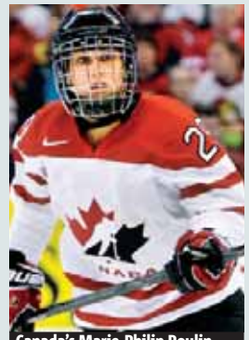
Marie-Philip Poulin, who scored twice in Canada's win over the U.S. in the 2010 Olympic final, remains sidelined for Thursday's game in Calgary against the Americans because of a high ankle sprain.

The talented, speedy forward from Beauceville, Que., is expected to be an impact player for the Canadian women again as they prepare to defend the gold in Sochi, Russia, in February.

However, the 22-year-old has appeared in just a handful of Canada's 32 games since September and none against the United States.

"It's been a tough one for sure," Poulin said Wednesday at the Markin MacPhail Centre. "It's always hard to miss a game, especially when you play the U.S."

An opposing player landed on the outside of her left ankle during a tournament against midget triple-A men's teams in September. Poulin re-injured the ankle in her third game back in November.


Canada's Marie-Philip Poulin RICHARD WOLOWICZ/GETTY IMAGES

Poulin has set Dec. 28, when Canada plays the U.S. in St. Paul, Minn., as the next target date of her return.

The exhibition game in Calgary is the third of six between Canada and the U.S. this winter as both teams train full-time for Sochi.

They'll square off again Dec. 20 in Grand Forks, N.D., followed by the game in Minnesota, then Dec. 30 in Toronto. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Hits no longer welcome at home

Major League Baseball plans to eliminate home-plate collisions.

New York Mets general manager Sandy Alderson, chairman of the rules committee, made the announcement Wednesday at the winter meetings. He said player health and increased awareness of concussions were behind the decision.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Welker shelved against Chargers

Wes Welker won't play Thursday night against San Diego as he recovers from his second concussion in less than a month.

Broncos coach John Fox officially ruled him out Wednesday.

The NFL's protocol for concussed players would have allowed Welker only to participate in light practice Thursday and only if he had passed baseline cognitive tests earlier in the week.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL. Maple Leafs KO'd by Kings' rookie goalie

Jeff Carter scored midway through the third period as the Los Angeles Kings beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 3-1 for their fifth straight win Wednesday.

Carter beat former teammate Jonathan Bernier with a wrist shot between the legs on a 2-on-1 at 9:40 for his eighth of the year. Defenceman Paul Ranger failed to keep the puck in the Los Angeles end, creating the odd-man rush.

Drew Doughty and Kyle Clifford, with an insurance goal with 1:59 remaining, also scored for Los Angeles (21-7-4) before 19,375 at the Air Canada Centre.

Martin Jones, a 23-year-old rookie from North Vancouver, earned his fourth straight win in four career NHL starts for Los Angeles with ex-Leaf Ben Scrivens on the bench. Kings No. 1 Jonathan Quick is out injured.

Jones came into the game with a .973 save percentage and a 0.65 goals-against average. He had stopped 73 of 75 shots and hadn't been beaten in 142 minutes and 46 seconds.

Cody Franson scored for Toronto (16-13-3), which deserved better on the night.

The Leafs were without captain and top defenceman Dion Phaneuf, serving the first half of a two-game suspension for a weekend hit on Boston's Kevan Miller. But winger Joffrey Lupul returned after a seven-game absence due to a groin tear.

Kings winger Jeff Carter and Leafs defenceman Mark Fraser collide on Wednesday in Toronto. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The Leafs showed more jump than a Los Angeles team playing for the second night in a row but were unable to convert their advantage into goals.

Still, the Kings came in riding a season-high four-game winning streak, hot on the heels of a 6-0 win in Montreal, and were 11-1-4 in their last 16 games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	31	21	8	2	86	62	44
Montreal	32	19	10	3	85	71	41
Detroit	32	15	9	8	87	85	38
Tampa Bay	30	17	10	3	85	76	37
Toronto	32	16	13	3	87	90	35
Ottawa	32	12	14	6	92	105	30
Florida	32	10	17	5	73	106	25
Buffalo	31	7	22	2	53	92	16

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	32	21	10	1	98	71	43
Washington	31	17	12	2	98	90	36
Carolina	32	13	13	6	75	91	32
NY Rangers	32	15	16	1	70	84	31
New Jersey	32	12	14	6	73	82	30
Columbus	31	13	15	3	78	86	29
Philadelphia	31	13	15	3	70	85	29
NY Islanders	32	9	18	5	80	111	23

Wednesday's results
Los Angeles 3 Toronto 1
Chicago 7 Philadelphia 2
Minnesota at Anaheim

Tuesday's results
Los Angeles 6 Montreal 0
Washington 6 Tampa Bay 5 (SO)
Buffalo 2 Ottawa 1 (SO)
Columbus 5 New Jersey 4
Nashville 4 NY Rangers 1
Florida 3 Detroit 2 (SO)
St. Louis 2 Winnipeg 1
Chicago 6 Dallas 2
Phoenix 3 Colorado 1
Boston 2 Calgary 1
Edmonton 5 Carolina 4 (OT)
NY Islanders 3 San Jose 2 (SO)

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	34	23	6	5	129	93	51
St. Louis	29	20	6	3	100	67	43
Minnesota	32	18	9	5	77	75	41
Colorado	29	20	9	0	83	68	40
Dallas	29	14	10	5	83	86	33
Winnipeg	32	14	14	4	83	90	32
Nashville	31	14	14	3	71	89	31

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	33	21	7	5	106	86	47
Los Angeles	32	21	7	4	88	63	46
San Jose	31	19	6	6	103	78	44
Vancouver	33	18	10	5	88	81	41
Phoenix	30	17	8	5	97	94	39
Calgary	30	11	15	4	79	100	26
Edmonton	32	11	18	3	89	109	25

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Montreal at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Columbus at NY Rangers, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Detroit at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Dallas at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Colorado at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
Carolina at Calgary, 9 p.m.
NY Islanders at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Boston at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.
Minnesota at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

Friday's games
New Jersey at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Washington at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Edmonton at Vancouver, 9 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pts
Crosby, Pgh	16	27	43
Kane, Chi	17	23	40
Malkin, Pgh	8	30	38
Getzlaf, Ana	16	21	37
Tavares, NYI	12	24	36
Ovechkin, Wash	26	9	35
Perry, Ana	20	15	35
Steen, StL	21	12	33
Backstrom, Wash	7	25	32
Thornton, SJ	5	27	32
Kunitz, Pgh	17	14	31
Marleau, SJ	14	16	30
St. Louis, TBL	13	17	30
Zetterberg, Det	11	19	30
Couture, SJ	10	20	30
Kessel, Tor	16	13	29
Sharp, Chi	14	15	29
Karlsson, Ott	8	21	29
H. Sedin, Vcr	8	21	29

Not including last night's games

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	19	3	.864	—
d-Miami	16	6	.727	3
Atlanta	11	11	.500	8
d-Boston	10	14	.417	10
Charlotte	10	12	.455	9
Washington	9	11	.450	9
Detroit	10	13	.435	9½
Chicago	8	12	.400	10
Cleveland	8	13	.381	10½
Toronto	7	13	.350	11
Brooklyn	7	14	.333	11½
Orlando	7	15	.318	12
Philadelphia	7	16	.304	12½
New York	6	15	.286	12½
Milwaukee	5	17	.227	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Portland	18	4	.818	—
Oklahoma City	17	4	.810	½
d-San Antonio	17	4	.810	½
d-L.A. Clippers	15	8	.652	3½
Houston	15	7	.682	3
Denver	13	8	.619	4½
Dallas	13	9	.591	5
Phoenix	12	9	.571	5½
Golden State	12	10	.545	6
Minnesota	11	11	.500	7
New Orleans	10	10	.500	7
Memphis	10	11	.476	7½
L.A. Lakers	10	11	.476	7½
Sacramento	6	13	.316	10½
Utah	4	19	.174	14½

x - clinched playoff berth; y - division; z - conference.

Wednesday's results
Orlando 92 Charlotte 83
L.A. Clippers 96 Boston 88
San Antonio 109 Milwaukee 77
New Orleans 111 Detroit 106 OT
Minnesota 106 Philadelphia 99
New York 83 Chicago 78
Oklahoma City 116 Memphis 100
Utah at Sacramento
Dallas at Golden State

Tuesday's results
San Antonio 116 Toronto 103
Cleveland 109 New York 94
Indiana 90 Miami 84
Minnesota 121 Detroit 94
Oklahoma City 101 Atlanta 92
Brooklyn 104 Boston 96
Milwaukee 78 Chicago 74
Phoenix 114 L.A. Lakers 108

Thursday's games
L.A. Clippers at Brooklyn, 8 p.m.
Houston at Portland, 10:30 p.m.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You may think you have to tear everything down and start from scratch but it's not necessary. There is precious little wrong with your life and a few minor changes here and there is all that is required.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
It may at times seem as if you are not making much progress but in a matter of days there will be clear signs that you are on the verge of a major breakthrough.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Your thoughts seem to be a bit heavy and there are certainly one or two areas where you need to get serious. But don't get so serious that all the fun goes out of your life.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
It may be true that someone is saying awkward things about you but there is no reason to get paranoid and start thinking everyone is against you. Whatever you've done, you are still most people's number one.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It may be hard for you to understand why certain people act in certain ways but there is no point getting worked up about it because you won't change the way they are. Try acting as if you don't care what they do.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you have started on a scheme then you must see it through to the end. Having invested so much time and energy, you cannot give up on it now. Besides, it could work out.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
At some stage today you will realize that you are not going to get far with a joint project, thanks to people dragging their feet. You will, though, make progress in areas where you can work on your own.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
When you get annoyed, you go to extremes and an unfortunate person is going to be in your bad books today. Yes, maybe you will be too hard on them, but it will be a long time before they dare to upset you.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Don't take anything too seriously today because if you do, you may get depressed and start wondering why you bother to make an effort. Snap out of it by focusing on things that make you smile.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You want to help someone who is struggling but you know if you do they will struggle more in the future. They need to learn from their mistakes, painful though that may be.

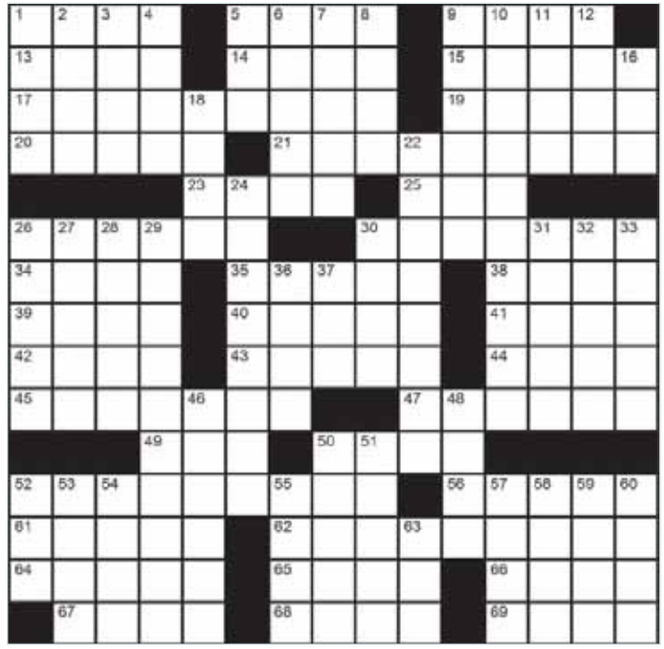
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You will have to work twice as hard to catch up on things you should have done yesterday. If you apply yourself ,you may get ahead — and get a reward for your efforts tomorrow.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Are you making the most of your time? Chances are you have allowed hours, days, even weeks to slip by without doing anything special. That must now change. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

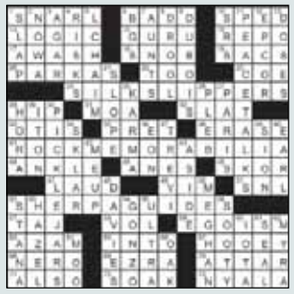
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Prima donna
5. Cloak: Spanish
9. 2s
13. Plow pullers
14. Caesar's 955
15. Steal a stash, again
17. Nickname of Manitoba's capital city
19. SNL alum Cheri
20. Rock bottom
21. The Band concert film directed by Martin Scorsese, "The __ __" (1978)
23. UK awards since 1917
25. "For __ a jolly good..."
26. Daniel Defoe's 1719 book, Robinson __
30. More like cow juice
34. From-clothes fluff
35. Sitar songs
38. Family suffix in zoology
39. Hodgepodge
40. Get a glass of water to get cold really fast: 2 wds.
41. Telegram
42. Hireling
43. "__ _ go on?"
44. Like some airports [abbr.]
45. Working together well
47. Tropical fruits
49. Montreal's 'me' The Arctic
50. Shoe part
52. 1880 Dostoevsky novel, The Brothers __
56. Overbearing
61. "_ ___ Teenage Werewolf" (1957)
62. Jets competition, when in Colorado
64. Type of mil. mission
65. Surrealist painter, __ Magritte (b.1898 - d.1967)
66. Helix
67. __ __ stretch of the imagination
68. Too
69. And others [abbr.]: 2 wds.

Down
1. This clue: #1-__
2. Corn lily
3. Peddle
4. __-gravity
5. "Green River" gr.
6. Plentiful
7. Impassionate requests
8. Norms, for short
9. Plaster-spreading tool
10. Alberta city south of Edmonton
11. Great pitcher Mr. Hershiser
12. Separate, as laundry
16. Commerce, curtly
18. Fun suffix to 'Switch'
22. 1983 Bryan Adams single: 2 wds.
24. Prehistoric land of
26. Horse-on-cobblestone sounds
27. Amber __, "Dancing with the Stars" reigning champion
28. Employees organization
29. Profession of 2nd Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie
30. __-of-honour
31. Picking from a police lineup
32. Keep one's __ __ the ground
33. Movie studio stocks
36. __-Deucey (Backgammon variant)
37. "Golly!"
46. Comedian/actor Ray
48. Duchess of __ (Subject of Spanish painter Goya)
50. Shack
51. Singer, Faith __
52. Wine aperitif
53. Caught in _ __ of lies
54. Daring
55. __ Phillips (Queen Elizabeth's granddaughter who is an Olympic equestrian)
57. __ and for all
58. William Wallace, for example
59. Mr. LaBeouf
60. Scream
63. Sean Penn's director father

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	6		4	8				
	9		6				1	3
		1	9			6		
						2	7	6
6				1				5
5	8	7						
		3			5	1		
4	5				9		3	
				7	2		9	

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	4	5	6	2	9	1	3	8
9	3	8	7	1	4	6	5	2
6	2	1	8	5	3	7	4	9
4	9	7	3	6	1	8	2	5
8	1	3	2	4	5	9	6	7
2	5	6	9	8	7	3	1	4
3	8	4	1	7	2	5	9	6
1	6	2	5	9	8	4	7	3
5	7	9	4	3	6	2	8	1

*Conditions apply. Vouchers are rewarded for in-store bookings made with a Flight Centre travel agent. For full details speak with a Flight Centre Travel Consultant or visit www.flightcentre.ca/enquiry/travel-enquiry/consumer-incentive. BC REG: #H02790

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